STATE LIBRARY OF PENNSYLVANIA
3 0144 00185798 6

THE GRAY CAVALIER

THE STORY OF GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE

GENERAL LEE ON TRAVELER

AN EPIC TRILOGY

VOLUME III

The Gray Cavalier

The Story of
Robert E. Lee

By
LYMAN WHITNEY ALLEN

NEW YORK
THORNTON W. ALLEN COMPANY
1929

Copyright, 1929, by
Thornton W. Allen

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
PRESS OF THORNTON W. ALLEN, NEW YORK

PENNSYLVANIA
STATE LIBRARY

To My Son

THORNTON WHITNEY ALLEN

With deep appreciation of his interest
in the preparation and publication
of this Trilogy

235750

CONTENTS

Preludes

PAGE

Old Virginia 3
The Idol of the South 9

Part One

UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES

The Union's Foremost Soldier

THE SON OF LIGHT-HORSE HARRY

Prelude: So Rise the Captains Great . 13
The House of Lee 15
War Dreams and Service 19
Beyond the Rio Grande 22
John Brown and Harper's Ferry . . . 24

SLAVERY AND SECESSION

Prelude: Red Blood and Blue Blood . 26
The South's Uprising 28
Virginia's Call 31
The Fatal Choice 33
The Sword of Old Virginia 36

PAGE

Part Two

UNDER THE STARS AND BARS

The Battle-Soul of the Confederacy

STONE MOUNTAIN

General Lee and Traveler 41

RICHMOND TO CHANCELLORSVILLE

Prelude: The Light Behind the Veil . 43
Antietam
The Invasion of Maryland 44
Antietam's Crimson Field 46
Fredericksburg
The Red Slopes of Fredericksburg . 49
The Horseman upon Marye's Heights 51
Chancellorsville
The Bugles of Chancellorsville . . 53
The Great Flank March 55
The Death of Stonewall Jackson . 58
The Hero of Chancellorsville . . . 61
The Ring of Fire 63

CHANCELLORSVILLE TO GETTYSBURG

Prelude: The Blue Ridge Mountains . 66
On to Washington 68

PAGE

Along the Blue Ridge 70
Converging Armies 72
Gettysburg
  Seminary Ridge 75
  Across the Inferno 77
  The Thunders of the Titans . . . 80
  Pickett's Charge 82
  The Vision of Doom 85

GETTYSBURG TO COLD HARBOR

Prelude: The Wheel of Fate 87
Back to Old Virginia 89
Beside the Rapidan 91
The Watcher on Clark's Mountain . . 93
Beneath a Sheen of Victories . . . 96
The Waving of the Signal Flag . . . 98
The Wilderness
  In the Labyrinth 100
  Out of the Jungle 102
Spotsylvania
  The Bloody Angle 105
  A Master of Strategy 108
Cold Harbor
  Grant's Terrible Decision 110
  The Gray Defier 112

PAGE

PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND

Prelude: The White Battalions . . . 114
The Army of the Potomac: Across the James 115
The Crisis of Desperation 117
Lee's Visions from Petersburg
The Vision of Destruction 120
The Vision of Disintegration . . . 123
The Vision of Destiny
Lincoln's Second Inaugural . . . 127
Lee and Lincoln 130
The Fulness of Time 132
In the Majesty of Consecration . 135
The Capture of Petersburg
Five Forks: Pickett and Sheridan . 138
Petersburg's Abandonment 140
The Fall of Richmond
The Burning of the Capital . . . 143
The Pageant of Deliverance . . . 146
Lee's Spirit at Richmond's Gates . . 148

THE DRAMA OF APPOMATTOX

Prelude: The Lost Cause 152
The Rout of the Army of Northern Virginia 154

PAGE

Worse than a Thousand Deaths . . . 157
Lee's Surrender
The Ninth of April 160
The Will for Peace 162
The Gray Cavalier 164
The Blue Victor 166
The Valley of Dust and Ashes
The Sorrowful Army 168
Beyond Dawn's Rim 171
The Last Parade 173
The Blue and the Gray 176

THE PASSING OF A MIGHTY CAPTAIN

Prelude: The Martyr Sign 178
The Return to Richmond 180
Good Friday's Spell 183
Regiments of Darkness 186
In the City of the Seven Hills . . . 189
Tragedy and Revelation
Lincoln's Assassination 191
The Last Blow of Slavery 194
The Bell of Old Saint John's . . . 197
Lincoln's Burial 199
The Great Renascence 202

Part Three

BENEATH OLD GLORY

The Savior of the South

THE SAGE OF LEXINGTON

PAGE

Prelude: Lexington of Old Virginia . 207
Pavilions of Peace 209
A Place of Oracles 211
A Lyric to Culture 213
At Stonewall Jackson's Grave . . . 215
In the Valley of Virginia 219
The Pageant on the Hills 222

WITH THE IMMORTALS

Prelude: Life and Love 224
Into the Mists 225
The Shrine of the South 227

THE GRAY CAVALIER

OLD VIRGINIA

Old Virginia,
  Mother of Statesmen,
    Mother of Mighty Captains!
Old Virginia,
  Mother of Washington,
    Mother of Lee!

I

Blood-red Heart of the Old Dominion,
Giver of son succeeding son,
  Heroes of high degree,—
Peace-patricians or battle-peers,
Old Virginia's Cavaliers,
  Makers of history!

Patrick Henry was of thee;
Thomas Jefferson was of thee;
  Sires of America's Revolution.

Marshall and Madison were of thee;
  Seers of America's Constitution.

  Old Virginia,
    Soul of the Southland's regnant race,
    Ever guarding its power and place,—
  Old Virginia,
    Mother of Statesmen,
      Mother of Mighty Captains!

2

Out of far mystery, fresher than morning,
  Dispensations of Nature came,—
Lineage gloried,
Heritage storied,
  Brilliant as flame consuming flame.

  Beauty, compulsion to rapt romance;
Gallantry, heart and form adorning;
  Riot and rhythm of radiance
Mocking the lessening night-tide's warning;

  Houses of hospitality,—
Every portal and hall and room

Sweet with the bayberry's snuffed perfume,
  Bright with conviviality;

  Gentilesse, matron at every hearth,
  Mingling industry and mirth;
Chivalry, patron of courage, scorning
  Breed and deed of plebeian birth.

  Old Virginia,
    Queen of the Southland's commonweals,
    Wearing tradition's illumined seals!
  Old Virginia,
    Mother of Statesmen,
      Mother of Mighty Captains!

3

Thou wert Tyranny's ancient foe,
  Spirit of right turned sword and flame.
Staggered and fell before thee low
  Minions who fought for the cause of shame.

Independence,—her soul was thine;
  Revolution was deep in thee;
Blood for faith was thy marching sign,
  All for justice and liberty.

Cambridge to Yorktown,—'neath stormy sky,
  Dear was the triumph thy heroes won,
Counting it glory to live or die
  Fighting for freedom with Washington!

  Old Virginia,
    Head of the Southland's patriot host;
    Loyal to duty, thy sacred boast;
  Old Virginia,
    Mother of Statesmen,
      Mother of Mighty Captains!

4

Thou wert never Slavery's friend,
  Never Disunion's advocate,
  Till caught fast in the swirl of fate,
Terrible, irrestible,
Deaf to Rebellion's distant knell,
Blind to its sure predestined end,
  Thou didst join the Sisterhood
  Credulous of a delusive good.

Old Virginia, the battle-shaken,
  Through Secession's impassioned years,
Worsted, wasted, forlorn, forsaken,

Doomed with the doom of thy Cavaliers.
Sinks the heart as it thinks of thee,
Thee so shorn of thy majesty,

Old Virginia,
Front of the Southland's war-betrayed,
Leading thy heroes with broken blade,
Old Virginia,
Mother of Statesmen,
Mother of Mighty Captains!

5

Old Virginia, the new day comes,
Over forever the roll of drums.

Thou wert Destiny's ministrant,
Slowly achieving God's covenant.

Love and power conjoined redeem
Beauty for ashes beyond hope's dream.

He who clearly discerns the truth,
Hears thee swinging
Back to singing
Days of thy happy youth,—

Youth of thine of the olden time,
Filled with a richer rime and mime;

Sees thy darkened robes again
White through the blood of a million men;

Feels thee leal to thy real innateness,
Vibrant to every grace and greatness;

Calls to thee, and calls to thee,
Chanting the strain of thine ancientry,—

Old Virginia,
Mother of Statesmen,
Mother of Mighty Captains!
Old Virginia,
Mother of Washington,
Mother of Lee!

THE IDOL OF THE SOUTH

Justice to history—'tis for the stone;
Justice to bravery—'tis for the bronze;
Justice to chivalry—'tis for the song.

What sculptors cannot shape, poets must sing;
So to the singing more than stone or bronze,
The pageantry of martial days moves forth,
And the great General on his charger looms
Into the true perspective of the years.

The immortal Lee—remote from present eyes,
But clear in history's revealing light—
Stands out for vision and for wonderment,
By love remembered, age succeeding age,
The Battle-Soul of the Confederacy.

And thou, O History's Child, far past the time
Of those high tides of passion, may'st behold
What Heaven beheld when blindness smote the
earth,

And war through blindness gulfed a glorious
people.

Lo, war's Commander on the heights of
peace!—
List to the story of the Mighty Captain,
From Stratford House to Lexington, and see
Lee as he was, and is, and ever shall be,
Epochal there amid his silent guns,
A hero growing in his soldier fame,
Forevermore the Idol of the South!

Part One

UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES

THE UNION'S FOREMOST SOLDIER

Prelude

SO RISE THE CAPTAINS GREAT

When sound the far-off drums
  In spirits of far-off hearing,
And need of hardship comes
  To them who follow fearing
The cloudy ways of circumstance,
There works a ponderous chance.

'Tis known to wiser minds
  That some strong power selecting
From Nature's populous kinds
  Gives love its sure directing,
And forms life's future fashionings
Through time's immediate things.

So rise the Captains great
  Of destiny's achievings.
So move the lords of fate
  Out of the past's inweavings.
Who thus discerns may clearly see
How God shapes history.

THE HOUSE OF LEE

It was an hour of mystic consequence
When he, the Southland's soldier-son, was born
Within the historic fortress of his sires,
Palatial "Stratford House" of Old Virginia,
In the same chamber where his kinsmen twain
First opened eyes upon Westmoreland's hills,—
Famed Richard Henry Lee securely called
"The Orator of the American Revolution,"
And Francis Lightfoot Lee, his brother famed,
Both of that circle of illustrious ones
Who signed the Declaration of Independence.

He came from stock whose chivalrous ancestry
Linked with proud Lancelot and Lionel Lee,—
Lords of the Conqueror and Lion-Heart Richard—
And Robert Bruce, victor of Bannockburn.

True Cavaliers were they who built the House
Of Lee on Southern soil. From Britain's shores

235750

They sailed when darkness wrapped the Stuart
throne
And Ironside warriors trod her halls of state.
Yet when arose the cry against high wrongs
In days Colonial, they were champions
Of Independence and the Revolution.

Chief of Westmoreland's Knights of Liberty
Was he the brave and gifted Henry Lee,
Favorite of Washington since he was child
Of Washington's first Love, "The Lowland
Beauty,"
Both dear to the great Patriot,—she in days
Of winsome maidenhood stirring his heart;
And he, long afterward, by youthful feats,
Master of Cavalry, "Lee's Legion" named,
A storm equestrian, a whirlwind hoofed,
Turning the General's earlier thoughts of love
To worthy joy and hope in her brave son.
He was his stay at Valley Forge, his pride
As Governor of Virginia, and not least,
His frequent comfort 'neath Mount Vernon's
roof.
And when "The Father of his Country" died,
'Twas "Light-Horse Harry" at request of
Congress

Pronounced the high eulogium o'er the dead
Of "First in War" and all that sweetly follows.
'Twere strange if something of that knightliness
Passed not in power from father unto son.

Anne Carter, Shirley's heiress! She it was
Who added wealth to wealth and fame to fame,
And lineal noble blood to noble blood,
And Robert Edward to the House of Lee.
'Twas breast maternal served him loftily
The glorious kindredship of Scotland's crown.

The fineness, gentleness and courtesy,
Chivalric temper, courage, generous sense
Of intellect and social privilege
Of goodly parents and their mutual worth,
Mixed in their stately son of destiny.

Sweet Mary Custis, bride of Arlington,
Great-grand-daughter of Martha Washington!
She brought him large estates and social grace;
She brought him wedlock's perfect comradeship,

What generous man may claim of generous
woman,—
Faith's watchings along duty's tortuous ways,
Hope's cheerings up ambition's steep ascents,
Love's comfortings with understanding soul
Upon the heights of vision isolate.
She brought him children, wifehood's priceless
gift.
So by her grace, enriched with fatherhood,
He knew the embracing Fatherhood of God.

WAR DREAMS AND SERVICE

Reared in the atmosphere of chivalry
And stirred by legends of the knightly past,
He felt himself in spirit armor-clad,
And entering the jousts on prancing steed,
Sworn unto Beauty and ideals of Right.
Combat and valor, schools and courts of arms,
Appealed to every soldier quality
In him who, from the loins of warriors got,
Sensed martial lineage in flesh and soul.
He heard the trumpets sounding through his dreams.
He saw great banners waving in the sky.
The clouds were slopes where phantom armies marched,
The thunders Nature's high artillery.
So felt he, thought he, turned he up the ways
Of boyhood's courses and of youth's ascents.

In after years, commanding real battalions,
His venturous spirit and his valiant deeds

Were blazonry to every academe
Of home, West Point, and the stern sphere of
war.

But in the Nation's School, as in his home,
The "States Rights" doctrine stamped his open-
ing mind,
And 'neath the aegis of his Government
He learned, alas, that his belovèd State,
If so her people willed, might rise supreme,
And break the ties that bound her to the
Union.—
Let blame be just as virtue judgment gives.—
And in the Nation's School, as in his home,
He found the pregnant meaning of those words
Upon the shield of West Point's Hall of Fame,
Of "Duty, Honor, Country." Thus he passed
Full-laden with conceptions and ideals
Prefiguring the struggle soon to come,
And full-equipped for action. Thus he passed
From martial dreaming unto martial service.

Service it was of science and of skill,
Of engineering, ne'er to be forgot.
Has Hampton Roads a voice from bulwarks
strong,

The Mississippi from far-fended shores,
Or has Fort Hamilton an answering cheer
Across Manhattan's spacious harbor wards?
These cite achievements wrought for Country's
sake
By him who struck the hardest at her heart.

BEYOND THE RIO GRANDE

From victory of Buena Vista on
Around the old walled town of Vera Cruz,
The Mississippi Valley's soldiery
Proved heroes truly. Not the least was he
Whose deeds won virile praise from General
Scott.

At Cerro Gordo over mountain trails,
Turning the Mexican defenders' flank,
Crossing the lava tract of Pedregal,
Guiding his troops to triumph at Contreras,
Passing the Cherubusco Bridge in state,
Pursuing to the City of Mexico
Fierce Santa Anna's whelmed battalions—
These were among his renderings of service.

'Twas up Chapultepec's strong castled heights
That side by side climbed Johnston, Longstreet,
Grant,

McCellan, Jackson, Pickett, Armistead,—
Youths friendly, comrades close, but later on
Arrayed as foes in fratricidal strife.
Among those heroes, under Stars and Stripes,
Fearless and faithful and distinguished oft,
Rode Lee, exalted at the Army's front,
Pronounced the Nation's greatest battle-chief.

JOHN BROWN AND HARPER'S FERRY

Back from the hot war-ways of Mexico,
His martial genius later set proud seal
Upon West Point in superintending care.
Thence, in command of new-made Cavalry,
He served the Lone Star State against the Red
Man.

'Twas prophecy and fate together mixed,
That unto him was given the strangest
work
To crush the strangest hero—sinner or saint
Let history judge—whose maddened brain was
filled
With plots of slave-uprisings, fights for hate,
And slaughter for emancipation's sake—
John Brown, last scion of the Puritans,
First son incarnadine of Abolition.

Oh Ossawattamie and Harper's Ferry!
Oh blood and gallows,—terrible presage
Of times more terrible whose lurid wings
Cast ominous shadows o'er a troubled land!
No man may write the tale. Years come and go,
And questioning generations tread the earth,
But none may ever picture those dark hours
With issuances as of whirlwinds loosed.
Alas, John Brown; alas, Lee's judgment sword;
Under the Stars and Stripes—and Destiny!

Prelude

RED BLOOD AND BLUE BLOOD

Red blood gotten from fighting sires;
  Blue blood gotten from haughty mothers;
    Such commingling, how War prizes!
Thus behold wild battle fires,
  And mad brothers slaughtering brothers!
    Hear the cry of earth that from the blood
      arises!

      O believing Southland!
      O beloved Virginia!
    See the portent light the blinded eye
      despises!

Blue blood given of chafing hearts;
  Red blood given of long vainglory;

Such outpouring, how War uses!
Thus behold while fury starts
And the swords and guns turn gory!
Hear the cry of blood that from the earth
accuses!

O bewildered Southland!
O bereaved Virginia!
See the prophet sign the darkened mind
refuses!

THE SOUTH'S UPRISING

Each day was darker than its yesterday.
Each wind of morn was wilder than the last.
The South was rising for an ancient faith
'Gainst which the North and West had steadily
Set frame and feature. Lee, who stood and heard
The Inaugural words of Lincoln as he took
The Nation's helm within his untried hand,
Knew well the past, remembering former days,—
The Southern pulsings of hearts cultured long
Into the double doctrine for which now
Tongues eloquent were thundering, arsenals
Were laden with the instruments of strife.
Long had he balanced in the days of eld
The little Slaver Ship at Jamestown's wharf
And the brave Mayflower upon Plymouth Rock,
The centuried significance of each,

Divergent history of North and South,
And now two civilizations face to face
To meet in mortal combat, one to rise
And dominate the other—God alone
Knew which—'twas strange none knew beside,
Not even Lincoln, first among his peers,
And like his ancient namesake, "Friend of God."
And yet did he not know? Methinks he knew,
Since God he knew, walking alone with Him
Daily upon the mountain peaks of truth
And seeing the graphic order of the world.
And did not Lee, who likewise walked with God,
Know which, but heard a Voice none other heard
Compulsive, since it ministered unto
In tragic tones the pageant ethical
That marches to the music of the stars?
Behold the Mighty Captain, as thine eyes
Con history's page! Truth's swerveless chronicler
Will tell thee this in subtle imagery
Of the high soul that sensed the Squadrons White
Round Appomattox Court House, and along

The sorrowful way he rode to meet his men—
His tearful comrades bearing still aloft
The great Lost Cause translated by defeat
Into Love's centuried processional.

VIRGINIA'S CALL

O'ER all the clamorous voices of the South
Lee heard Virginia calling to her sons.
Her call was as a mother's in distress,
A cry of faith unto her faithful children.
The Old Dominion's hills and vales were tongued
With fear articulate. Forth from famed spots—
Cradles of ancient and illustrious sires—
Seemed ever rising wraiths of patriots.
Soil threatened by invaders summoned him,
Stratford and Shirley and loved Arlington.
Homes of his neighbors mingled with their plaints.
He saw on pallid and familiar cheeks
Appealing tears. Eyes of entreaty turned
To him with fierce new light from olden love.
Hands of beseeching, prayer-wise shaped, reached out
And touched the hem of his High-Priestly robe.

Midst the exalted City of the Land,
Under the shadows of the Capitol,
He heard the increasing tread of gathering
troops,
Ranks upon ranks of blue-hued regiments
Beneath Old Glory, for the invasion set
Of Southern soil to crush Secession's dream.
He heard likewise the Nation's regnant voice
Desiring him, her soldier-champion,
All honored as her first of battle-chiefs,
And fitted for her Army's generalship,
To lift his powerful sword in her defense,
And as her Mighty Captain lead her hosts.

No mortal ever fought a harder fight
Upon the mystic field of conscience. Where
Waved Duty's plumes?—for Duty would he
serve.
If only he might see through fire and cloud
Her form commanding and inviolate!
Who cares for frowning steeps if Duty calls?
Who minds the darkling deeps if Duty guides?
Duty, if thou be mistress of man's fate,
Then fate turns providence with skies aglow.

THE FATAL CHOICE

Across his name and fame has history
Branded interior struggle. Slavery
To him was evil's blotch upon the land.
Secession, phrased by him as revolution,
He deprecated, with its arch-curse strife.
Disunion shaped a terror whose stern voice
Compelled disloyalty to Stars and Stripes.
And war he hated, being versed in war.
His instincts sensed the beasts of passion loosed
And felt the tigerish strides of politics.
Convulsions shook his soul,—the while he saw
Time's near horizons dense with lowering clouds
And charged with mounting flames,—the while he heard
Approaching fratricidal thundery
And the strong pleadings of his home and State.

His people's deep deflection smote his heart,
Since through past years devotion to the Union
Had been the master motive of his life.
Yet were they not his people, wronged? he thought.
Alas the fallacy that shaped his woe!
And was he not the Old Dominion's child
And son of Light-Horse Harry? Was he not,
Being son of Henry Lee, the noble scion
Of noble sire, with nature deeply hued
By the best blood of Southern lineage,
Patrician of patricians? Was he not
Virginia's best beloved? And could his face
Front hers but with allegiance? Could he be
First midst and heading her invading foes?
And was he not by her seceding act,
Being a true Virginia citizen,
Involved with her involvement, her withdrawal
Compelling his, hers being his just excuse?
Alas the exigence that wrought his doom!

The fatal choice—'tis storied lastingly;
The struggle in the dark for Duty's hand,
The sad rejectment of his Country's hest,
The leadership of swiftly gathering troops,
The desperate turning Southward, the recoil

Upon the States Rights doctrine, alienate
From Stars and Stripes; the giving up his
sword,
The blade of fealty, for Rebellion's brand;
The raising of gray regiments beneath
The Stars and Bars to strike Old Glory down;
And the acceptancy of generalship
Of Slavery's and Secession's rising hosts.
Alas the tragedy that broke his heart!

THE SWORD OF OLD VIRGINIA

Behold him in the ever-widening light
Of history! Thou can'st not apprehend
The delicate sense of his abandonment
Until thou hast perceived the laurelings
Of love, of prayer, and of adoring hope,—
The South's idolatry of expectation.

Before the State Convention of Virginia,
He stood,—having received from her, his Mother,
The sword which he should draw in her defense.

Within the circle of admiring peers
He stood, Commander of Virginia's troops,
Hearing proud words and humbly answering;
Hearing himself phrased like his foster-sire,
First of Virginia's living citizens
In war, in peace, and in the people's hearts.

'Tis said that fresh and ruddy he appeared
Like David from the sheepfolds, in the prime
Of manly beauty, the embodiment
Of proud heroic lines of ancestry,
No soldier rough, but with that courtly grace
Which ever marks the Southern Gentleman.

Thus did Virginia's favorite son begin
As Mighty Captain 'neath Secession's seal
Bearing the South's dependency and hope.

Part Two

UNDER THE STARS AND BARS

THE BATTLE-SOUL OF THE CONFEDERACY

STONE MOUNTAIN

GENERAL LEE AND TRAVELER *

BEHOLD the monument's majestic front,
The Mighty Captain's carven in the stone!
Proudly he strides his peerless Traveler
Facing the battlefield as when he viewed
His tried divisions march across to death.
High art has triumphed where an army failed.

'Tis movement without motion, portraiture
Silent, yet thunderous. His head is bared,
Lifted o'er form erect and soldiery,
In courtly dignity and self-control.
Beside him hangs his sword, Virginia's gift,

* Following the unveiling of the figure of General Lee on the face of Stone Mountain, Atlanta, Georgia, April 9th, 1928, a dinner was given by the Capital City Club in honor of distinguished visitors attending the event. On the place cards used at the dinner was engraved the above poem.

His great Excalibur in chosen hand,
The while his mind evolves fine strategy—
Genius transmuting into generalship
Signed in the great flank march to Chancellors-
ville
And the red jungles of the Wilderness.

The one hand holds his hat, indicative
Of deference to devoted bravery
Advancing towards the end his soul defies.
The other grasps his horse's rein, as forth
Their spirits spring together into midst
Of combat rudely checked by circumstance.

Prelude

THE LIGHT BEHIND THE VEIL

Those battle days are ended;
  Some call their story stale;
But time has well befriended
  The light behind the veil—
The spirit and its flaming
On Duty's altar framing
  Faith's destiny whose sign inspires
  Past war's provincial fires.

The world will ever cherish,
  Despite epochal grief,
What time forbids to perish,
  The truth beneath belief—
The spirit and its burning
On Duty's altar turning
  To Love's will working recompense
  For war's supreme offence.

THE INVASION OF MARYLAND

For Richmond's capture Northern armies marched
Up the Peninsula 'twixt the James and York.
Daily Lee rode along the Southern lines
Watching McClellan's host. His face was calm;
High dignity graced every motion; form
And features wore the spell of courtliness;
And every word bespoke the Mighty Captain.

With Richmond saved and each adventure crowned,
Why should he not invade his foeman's land,
Fill Washington with terror, lift the South
To cheer reiterate and certain hope,
Compelling recognition of the world,
And ushering in her day of independence.

So moved he, following his constant dream—
Proud banners waving o'er triumphant arms,

Defiance blazing in ascendant ranks.
So crossed he the Potomac,—Stonewall's sword
Leading the columns while his gray troops sang,
"Dixie" and "Maryland, My Maryland."

ANTIETAM'S CRIMSON FIELD

THUS crossed they the Potomac, hope's mirage
Shaping illusions. From South Mountain driven,
Lee moved his Army southward in recoil,
Back towards the river and Virginia's zones.

'Twixt Sharpsburg and Antietam's Creek he stood
Upon a ledge of rock, his anxious eyes
Fixed on the field, watching his great defense.
All things he saw and heard and subtly knew,—
Hooker and Jackson in terrific fight;
Mansfield's quick charge to death at Dunker Church;
The Twelfth Corps heading to a besom of fire;
The half of Stonewall's matchless battle-line
In long rows lying midst the crimson corn;
Hooker borne wounded back through flame and smoke,

And Sedgwick's brave Brigade rolled upon doom
By the resistless storm of Southern fire.
About the Church, wild fury; by the Bridge,
Red surge and foam; and the engaged plateau—
Four times now lost, now won—a ghastly stretch
Swept by the levin and the shouts of war.

He saw the Cornfield, filled with flame and gore,
Crossed and re-crossed by his devoted troops;
The East Wood shaken by the havocking;
The Bloody Lane crowded with Southern dead;
While all about him raged his smoking guns
Above the ebb and flow, triumph, defeat,
Carnage and wreckage, and the wind-blown wails
Of twenty thousand bleeding dying men.

There as he stood like some fierce lion at bay,
Hard-pressed and desperate, within him rose
The ancestral ancient spirit of the Bruce
Got from the loins of gloried battle-sires,
The rampant awesome nature leonine,
Deliberate and terrible. With tides
Of blood before him, with wide swaths of dead

About his feet, he firmly stood, and seemed
As 'twere the inviolate arbiter of fate
From whom fell back, awed and obedient,
His every chief, feeling his majesty.

All the next day he waited in wild reck
Of every risking of the foe's assault—
The foe's assault next day, which never came.

THE RED SLOPES OF FREDERICKSBURG

Back on Virginia's soil the Mighty Chief
Along the Shenandoah slowly passed,
Crossing the Blue Ridge to Culpeper Court
House,
And onward to the heights of Fredericksburg.

At Fredericksburg, the Federals in assault,
The chain of hills behind the nestling town
Become a frowning fortress lined with guns
Manned by the master gunners of the South,—
Lee on the hills midst works impregnable,
Watching the movements of the Northern host.

Emergent from the Rappahannock's stream
In triple battle lines and pageantry
Of pomp and splendor marched the Union
Army—
Burnside's battalions—on to Fredericksburg.

Southern artillery crowned Marye's Heights,
Doing its duty in a roll of flame—
The whole descent a dazzling panoply
Of batteries, bayonets, Confederates
With Federals massing, rushing upon strife
Across the reddening slopes of Fredericksburg.

THE HORSEMAN UPON MARYE'S HEIGHTS

FOUR-DEEP they stood, those fighters of the South,
Laying in piles and cross-piles at their front
The Union dead as each assault was made,
While redder grew the spreading butchery.
Unsheltered and beneath relentless fire
They strode, those Union men,—the while they strode
Falling through waste and ruin upon death.

All through those hours of raging holocausts
Lee stood among his gunners on the hills.
He watched the increasing tides of carnage roll
Down to the river's brink, their crimson sweep
Into the sallow waters. Eyes and heart
Beheld the foe o'erwhelmed on corse-strewn plain.
And all the raging thunders of his guns,

And all the furious shoutings of his men,
And all the clarion voices of his soul
Were whirlwind, tempest, crying in his ears—
"Victor of Fredericksburg!" A gathering awe
Engulfed his face and form; a vatic light
Loomed up in flashing eyes as though he saw
The morning stars of victory and heard
The music of the trumpets of his dreams.

THE BUGLES OF CHANCELLORSVILLE

It was Virginia's Springtime. Face to face
Two armies waited for the battle bugles,—
'Twixt them the Rappahannock as of yore
And Fredericksburg with frightful memories.
Across the river Hooker's forces marched,—
A mighty host and certain of success.
But Lee upon the heights of Fredericksburg
Saw as a seer sees, knew as genius knows.

From Fredericksburg the Southern Army moved
Towards Catherine Furnace, facing Hooker's host.
Stuart, Lee's roving eye, perceived the breaks
In Hooker's bristling columns gathering
Within the circling woods of Chancellorsville.

'Twas night historic fore historic day.
Beneath the pine trees Lee and Jackson sat—
David and Jonathan they oft were called—
Their seats were cracker boxes, and their light
Was fitful flaming of a meager fire.
There in the early dawn, ere yet 'twas morn,
The great flank march on Hooker's right was
planned.

THE GREAT FLANK MARCH

Oh 'twas a mighty march that bright May day,
When six and twenty thousand Southern braves
Struck westward on their arduous emprise,
The spirit of Stonewall Jackson in each man,
And Lee's behind them. As an urging wind
Spreads a ship's sails and drives her at full speed
Unto the destined port, so did those powers
Of faith and expectation force them on
Till tramping feet seemed winged. Onward they strode,
Strode steadily those fifteen miles and paused,
If pause it were, so furious was the assault
That ushered in the setting of the sun.

Into the circle of the Union lines,—
Their muskets stacked, the men at evening meal,—

The forest open flung its shadowy gates;
Nature in tumult billowed out her depths;
In wild bewilderment the denizens
Of woods and thickets issued suddenly—
Beasts, birds, and creeping things innumerous
Foundering and fluttering and writhing forth,
Their haunts invaded by the feet of flame,
Their creature life caught in a swirl of fire
And driven into the open by fright and pain.
Behind them followed shouts and trumpetings
And yells demoniac. Sheets of leaden hail
Crashed through the trees, and blazing musketry
Reddened the forest gloaming. On they charged,
Those men of Stonewall Jackson from the woods,
Those fierce battalions from the tangled woods,
Bursting like bolts of doom into the open.

Alas those Union soldiers! Chaos fell
Upon them, wild confusion stained with blood.
'Twas terror stumbling headlong over wreck;
'Twas panic raging round the feet of death.
No power could stay their flight,—not Howard even,
Waving his empty sleeve as 'twere his sword,
And shouting cheer, could turn those fugitives.

With right wing routed, over thick-strewn dead,
Flinging away their knapsacks and their
weapons,
The stricken soldiers rushed to Chancellorsville.
Jackson behind them irresistible.

THE DEATH OF STONEWALL JACKSON

NAUGHT but resistance fiercer than attack
Could e'er have stayed that whirlwind from the woods
Sweeping across the swath of Chancellorsville.
It came at last—the wild Blue cannonry
Hurling infuriate grape and canister
On Stonewall's ranks, laying them low in death;
And following—clashing muskets, bayonets,
Hand-to-hand struggle, reckless combating,
Ferocity supreme, and savagery
Let loose from all life's far ancestral caves.
It came at last; the mad assault was checked
Beneath the moonlight; but they halted there—
Those Southern fighters, as men seldom halt.
And in the moonlight Stonewall Jackson rode
A space beyond them reconnoitering.
And while he reconnoitered, suddenly
He and his little band unwitting strayed

Where light turned mist about familiar forms.
A swift and sheeted blaze of muskets burst
From Southern watchers on the skirmish line
Against conjectured foes,—and Jackson fell
Wounded and helpless and ere long to die.

Who cries, Wherefore? feels somehow life's
    mute power
Obedient to the White Battalions.
Perchance the loosened winds of destiny,
Here as elsewhere oft present, puissant,
Wrought to fulfill the Will of the Most High.
Who saw not then beholds now with clear eyes
The battle surging round the feet of God.

At length there came to him what comes to all.
Softly he breathed,—"To die, it is God's best."
Sweetly he spoke,—"To pass over the river
And rest beneath the shadow of the trees."
Most blest is he of Stonewall Jackson's faith,
Full faith in God and His redeeming grace.
His is the victory whether he live or die.

'Twas his last battle, and the world has cried,
Phrasing his soul and life immortally,—
"Hero of Chancellorsville." With early dawn

"Charge, and remember Jackson!" filled the air.
His spirit led them still. Forward they sprang,
With furious onslaught. Though hard-driven back,
Their mad ranks broken, on again they pressed,
While smoke and flame turned to avengement tongues
That cried, "Remember Jackson!" Thus they charged.

THE HERO OF CHANCELLORSVILLE

The spirit of Stonewall Jackson,
  Great soldier of the South,
    Who never quailed,
    Nor ever failed
  By stride, or guiding mouth.
He armored strength with fury;
  He weaponed faith with flame;
And every man that followed him
  A similar man became.
    Charge, and remember Jackson!
      His Soul is Captain still—
    The fighting Stonewall Jackson,
      The Hero of Chancellorsville.

The spirit of Stonewall Jackson,
  Great soldier of the Church,
    Who never fought,
    Nor ever wrought,
  Leaving Truth in the lurch.

He blazoned force with reverence;
  He bannered hope with prayer;
And every man that followed him
  A sacred fealty sware.
    Charge, and remember Jackson!
      His Soul is Captain still—
    The fighting Stonewall Jackson,
    The praying Stonewall Jackson,
      The Hero of Chancellorsville.

The spirit of Stonewall Jackson,
  Great soldier of the sky,
    Who never feared,
    Nor ever veered
  From Heaven's all-searching eye.
He garnished power with vision;
  He gloried love with death;
And every man that followed him
  Breathed Duty's martyr breath.
    Charge, and remember Jackson!
      His Soul is Captain still—
    The fighting Stonewall Jackson,
    The praying Stonewall Jackson,
    The deathless Stonewall Jackson,
      The Hero of Chancellorsville.

THE RING OF FIRE

'Twixt Catherine Furnace and the Old Plank
Road
With anxious heart Lee heard of Jackson's fate.
The whelming casualty roused fresh a soul
Born for the battle. Newly combatant,
Grief turning into fury punitive,
Westward he rushed his men towards Chancel-
lorsville,
The while the cry, "Remember Jackson!" rang,
And frenzied soldiers charged through flame
and smoke.

At last they won, those Stonewall veterans,—
Sickles and Meade and Birney falling back,
And just beyond them Hooker falling back,
And his headquarters, Chancellor House, in
flames;
And from the East tumult of marching troops,
Thunder of guns and roll of musketry

Across the flaming forest. On they charged,
Out of the flaming forest bursting forth,
Those men from Fredericksburg, those dauntless men,
The South's resistless men, and at their head,
On horseback, Lee.
Into the ring of fire,
His soldiers following, he spurred his horse
Up to the burning house, the Chancellor House,
The holocaust of war. And there he sat
While the house burned, and the dense forest flamed,
And lurid skies were pierced by blasting shells.
About him stood his comrades, brave, beloved,—
Their faces blackened by the battle grime
And forest smoke. Around him prostrate lay
His wounded, who, by seeming miracle,
Had dragged themselves out of the burning woods.
And there he sat, mounted on Traveler
As on a throne, while up into his face
His soldiers' swarthy faces turned elate.
And over all the roaring of the guns,
And over all the bursting of the shells,
And over all the crash of burning roof,

There rose the shouts of conquerors round their
    Chief,
The cheers of comrades round their Mighty
    Captain.

And they who saw him there beheld a soul
As on some near transfiguration mount,
His Dream of Victory shining at his side.
Thus sat he in an awesome glory throned,
Holding the thunderbolts of destiny,
Hearing the bugles of unvisioned hosts
Marching above the smoke-clouds in the blue.

CHANCELLORSVILLE TO GETTYSBURG

Prelude

THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Beautiful Mountains! The Blue Ridge they name you,
Ranges of azure and summits of gold.
Northland and Southland united acclaim you
Love's, while the mists of the morning unfold.
Memory's Blue Ridge Mountains!

Beautiful Mountains! Your Maker appointed—
Long ere America rose from the seas—
You to the struggle of Freedom's anointed,
Sacred and regnant with Love's high decrees.
Destiny's Blue Ridge Mountains!

Beautiful Mountains! Afar is the dreaming—
Marching of armies in hatred's array.

Now meets you, greets you, Old Glory a-streaming,
Flag of the Union and Sign of Love's sway.
Liberty's Blue Ridge Mountains!

ON TO WASHINGTON

Two armies faced each other anxiously,
While the soft Maytime opened into June,
And the broad Rappahannock seaward flowed
Serenely, seeming never to have known
The sanguine stains of slaughter on its bosom.

Behind the host of Hooker grief and gloom
Followed the strange defeat at Chancellorsville.
Behind the host of Lee tumultuous joy
Welcomed the tidings of Confederate triumph.
The South was with exultance all aflame.
What pride she had in her victorious arms,
Her matchless warriors and their peerless
Chief!
"Advance, our matchless Army!" was her cry.
"Forward, our peerless Leader!" was her song.
And 'twixt her cry and song her slogan rose,
Her passionate slogan, "On to Washington!"

At length they moved, the South's Invincibles,
Before the people's constant urgency
And the wild buoyance of their beating hearts.
And the vast Army wound by hill, through vale,
Like a huge python to Culpeper Court House.

ALONG THE BLUE RIDGE

Into the Shenandoah Valley marched
Lee's Army, and beside the Blue Ridge slopes
That caught the splendors of the westering sun,
Northward it steadily and swiftly passed.
But by the foothills of those azure mounts,
Along the eastern side of those bright crests,
Another army strode. And overhead
Moved on the heights the unseen Sabaoth,
The White Battalions. Thus the two earth hosts
Swept under skyey legions on and on.

Past the Potomac pressed the Southern ranks—
Ewell advancing up the Cumberland,
Raising before him consternation wide;
Longstreet and Hill meeting at Hagerstown,
Rushing their columns over dusty roads
To Chambersburg. As one notes suddenly
A black and thunderous cloud, with lightnings
rent,

Loosing its windy cohorts down the sky,
And flees for shelter from the approaching
storm,
So filled with terror at the sound and sight
Of Southern forces treading Northern soil,
The population fled the invader's path;
While just beyond them, helpless, terrified,
Lay Harrisburg, the Capital, Lee's goal.

CONVERGING ARMIES

In all the battle galleries of time
Compulsion has no picture like to it.
It hangs there as from fiery mist emerged—
The high lights weird with blaze of miracle;
The strong lines deep and crossing, black and red;
Wild surge of luridness and crimson foam;
Madness assaulting Nature's fastnesses,
And fury dashing destiny with murk
Inexorable as tumultuous.
And under all masses of marching men,
Marching unstopping and unstoppable
Straight upon carnage, as though bowls of wrath
Were emptied from apocalyptic skies;
And over all the White Battalions wheeling.

Onward the two vast armies pressed, each driven

By forces irresistible—none knew,
Nor Lee, nor Meade, nor any other, where—
To one fixed point of meeting, helpless each
Beneath those Powers unseen,—one towards the
east,
One towards the north, and each untowards the
other.

As thus they marched, the two great armies
marched,
Amidst his legions, Longstreet by his side,
Rode the South's Mighty Captain, ordering
His troops along the hot and dusty ways
Through Blue Ridge passes, over fertile fields,
And to the spot where many roads converged
Commanding every section round about.

And to that spot where many roads converged
Commanding every section round about,
The veteran skirmishers of Meade made haste,
With eye and ear attent to their new Chief
Who held the mighty Union Army fast
Beside Pipe Creek waiting assured advance.

And there they met—the pickets of both hosts—
There where the roads of destiny converged.

And there they clashed—the guards of North
and South—
There where the White Battalions had decreed.
And there they battled—Blues and Grays of
Fate—
There, round God's little town of Gettysburg.

GETTYSBURG: SEMINARY RIDGE

It was a dreadful sight that July morn,
There at McPherson's farm, and thence across
The meadows, and that bloody afternoon
O'er fields, down roads, and through the village
streets,
Confederates driving Federals in hot strife,
The carnage deepening as Blue ranks fell back
Towards Cemetery Ridge. It was a sight,
An immemorial sight, as suddenly
Against the western sky appeared the form
Of the great Southern Chief, a silhouette
In the fierce light. He sat upon his horse
And gazed upon the space bestrewn with dead.
The sun was setting on a red day—his.
And there was Cemetery Hill—for him.

The rumor of his presence, of his eyes
Fixed on contending legions, pricked men's
souls,

As rowels mettled steeds, to fiercer strife.
And thus went forward o'er the slaughter tide
The Stars and Bars into the deepening gloom.
And all the while, outlined against the west,
He sat there calmly, but his soul was strained
By tempest of exultance and of pride
With his first view of Gettysburg—and triumph.

ACROSS THE INFERNO

All through the second harrowing afternoon
There sat he close behind his frowning guns;
Beside him Longstreet, near in front athwart
The road to Emmittsburg, Peach Orchard's Angle,—
Beyond, the Wheatfield, Devil's Den, the Round Tops.
He saw the Corps of Sickles venture forth
Facing Peach Orchard,—witnessed Longstreet's ranks
Meet them with slaughterous hurricane of fire,
Driving them back with steady sheeted flame,
Changing the Wheatfield to a whirlpool red,
Spreading the golden grain with blood-splashed braves,
And filling Devil's Den with crimsoned dead.
There sat he gazing cross the Inferno's gulf,
O'er war's Gehenna and the Valley of Death.

Such three demoniac hours nor time nor space
Had witnessed e'er before,—such deadliness
Of lunge and grapple, turn and overturn,
Slaughter and carnage, surge and havoc wild,
Men changed to shapes betokening the Abyss,
And charged with the white-heaten blasts of hate.
Only the darkness quenched the fires of Hell,
Which he, on Hell's vast battle verge, perceived—
Only one solace his, the Stars and Bars
Afloat and crossing the Inferno's waste,
On towards the murk and chaos of the night.

No mortal save such as had been re-made
Through fume of fire at bloody Fredericksburg,
Through spume of blood at fiery Chancellorsville,
Into a creature to the thunder kin,
Into a thing of lightning's rage begot,
Born midst the whirlwind's furious travailling,
Could have beheld and heard, and lived that day.

But through those hours of blood and fire he lived,
Seeing at length his Georgians leap the Wall

And midst the wild Blue tempest Stars and
    Bars
Defiant float above the Union guns.
There in that moment Pickett's Charge was
    born.
And every voice set unto wisdom clear
Could change him not. He had beheld his dream
Rush cross the sky in flaming beckoning.
'Twas travail blazoning the smoking heavens.
'Twas Nemesis a-flying on wild winds.

THE THUNDERS OF THE TITANS

With dawn of the third day the hush of night
Prevailed o'er field and ridge, save for the end
Of the dark-halted struggle at Culp's Hill,
On until noon the ominous hush remained.

At length the stillness and the silence broke;
The Titans of the heights began their roar,—
Lee in the midst of his artillery,
His soul tempestuous beholding all
And hearing all and all the answering guns
Beyond the vale. The wild discordances
Were music to him, for they voiced his hope.
Though earth beneath him quaked convulsively,
And the hills shook with maddened vehemence,
His spirit was exultant, undisturbed.
He saw across the field exploding shells,
The bursting bombs, the flying rocks, the ground
Splintered and torn, and the vast shattering

Of cannon men and horses. Unto him—
Facing as 'twere the very pits of Hell
Wide-opened—watching, waiting, 'twas the
    frame
Of Victory forming out of blasts and wrecks.
Behold him there on Seminary Ridge,
Hearing the tempest, seeing the thunderbolts!

PICKETT'S CHARGE

At last the thunders ceased, and from his feet,
And 'neath the overshadowing of his guns,
His cherished dream began its featuring—
His dream that trailed the heavens in travail vast.
There sat he as they moved, those heroes moved,
Those Southern gray-hued columns, down the slope
And out into the field;—Pickett's in front
Behind thick lines of skirmishers;—brigades
Close after, Kemper's, Garnett's, Armistead's;—
With Pettigrew to right, Wilcox to left,
The twain the flanks of the devoted host.

There sat he watching as they marched across
The road to Emmittsburg, and just beyond
Discerned the bristling fringe of musketry

Along the Stone Wall on the Blue-hued Ridge.
He watched his veterans pass 'neath shot and
shell,
Each over comrade forms and trails of blood,
Un-wavering. On, his Virginians,
True to their history heroical,
Strode steadily and quickly. One by one
They fell, caught in the hurricane of fire
Sweeping from off the summit. Suddenly
There rose a wild fierce strain, a Southern cry,
A yell of fury, an exultant cheer.
'Twas that for which he waited as one waits
"He lives, he lives!" within the rooms of death.
And there across the Wall, upon the crest,
His men were rushing, fighting hand to hand,
Midst slaughter slaughtering. And as he heard
And saw, lo, there above the flame and smoke,
On the Stone Wall, among the Union guns,
Borne by the men of Pickett, proudly waved
The Blue Flag of Virginia.
'All the joy
That ever comes to soldier came to him
In that transcendent vision of his life.
Who saw him on his steed in that mad hour
Rise in the saddle, blaze with awful light
Of eyes and features, draw his charger's rein

Till the wild creature, wild as was his rider,
Reared as his master's towering spirit reared,
Beheld the mortal change to the Immortal,
With all the trailings of Olympus round him.

THE VISION OF DOOM

But only for a moment was the light,
And only for a moment was the joy.
Upon the summit of his battle dream
His marvelling eyes beheld the Blue Reserves
Rush from the rear along the Union Ridge
Unchained and inchoate, a vast outburst
Of riotous flame as from volcanian deeps.
He saw—his flushed face blanching—suddenly
Garnett fall from his horse; then Kemper fall
And borne back by his men; then Armistead,
Past the Stone Wall rushing with lifted blade,
Sink close by Cushing's gun; then Pickett turn,
His bare sword flashing o'er the broken ranks,
Unscathed as by a miracle, and lead
His shattered remnant back; then backward rush
A gray-hued avalanche of Southern braves
Falling and falling as they wildly fled;
And all the field a-crimson, and his dead
Strewn as the Autumn forest leaves are strewn

Dead on the earth. And as he fiercely gazed
Lo, his majestic dream crumbled to dust,—
And his heart broke.
There in that desperate hour
He turned his war-worn face back towards Virginia,
And saw, as only soldier-seer could see,
Beyond the Rapidan, past Petersburg,
Cross bloody battle lines and gory trenches,
Through Winter's tragic snows and Springtime's hunger,
With all its battered banners falling, trailing,
Down the steep slopes of failure and destruction,
The Lost Cause staggering to Appomattox,
His people's vision and their exultation
Become a horror and a mighty moaning
And a great darkness,—for hope's sun had set.

So sat he there against the sun as passed
Before him with black ruin round his feet
The White Battalions moving as to music
Across the crimson field among the dead.

GETTYSBURG TO COLD HARBOR

Prelude

THE WHEEL OF FATE

Alas war's savage thunder
  And murderous bolts of fire!
Faith stands aghast with wonder
  And shame at time so dire.
Where is the comprehending
  That can aright explain
How God permits forspending
  By cross and spike and pain
Of those His own anointed ones
He joys to name belovèd sons?

O Love, the Sufferer! Thou only can'st inform
Thy brothers falling, falling, before Un-reason's
  storm.

Alas war's crushing anguish,
  And sickening seals of death!
Life's dreams of beauty languish
  'Neath evil's ravening breath.
Whose is the far pursuing
  That can invade the skies
And learn why man's undoing
  Halts not all-seeing eyes
Which through the earth run to and fro
For sonship's sake God's strength to show?

O Love, the Conqueror! Thou only can'st translate
Ruin to breaking souls upon the wheel of fate.

BACK TO OLD VIRGINIA

FAILURE behind and lowering clouds before,
A broken heart within, through darksome days
And nights of drenching rain, by vexing roads,
Across the gorged Potomac at its flood,
Lee forced his Army back to Old Virginia,
While slowly, painfully, his foemen strode,
Pursuers battle-worn and hesitant.

The days of miracle were ended not,
Else Lee's spent legions ne'er could have re-
crossed
The swollen river and prolonged the strife.
God, the Omnipotent, hath strangeful lead.
Yet now the world beholds historic days
The servants of a High Beneficence,
To work the stronger Will, the loftier Love.
Thus burning Richmond, fateful Appomattox,
War-wasted cities, battle-blasted fields,
Hunger and tattered raiment, ruined hearths,

Throats songless, wraiths of expectation ranged
Midst graves irreconcilable, Despair
Stalking, the comrade of Destruction—these
Were the essentials if the impregnate South
Should bring to birth her Child of Destiny.

BESIDE THE RAPIDAN

The while Lee gazed again upon his State
And felt the ancient glory of her dreams,
Her vales seemed paved with light, and all her
hills
Held beacons streaming like huge satellites
That usher in the dawn towards the night's end.
And the night ended. All the founts of day
Leaped in the Mighty Captain and his men,—
Warriors again, like to Antaeus fabled,
Touching their mother earth, Virginia's soil,
And drawing out of her fresh strength and fire
Unconquerable. Though the Southern Cross
Had trailed the sanguine dust across the vale
Betwixt the smoking crests of Gettysburg,
The Army of Virginia set its front
Once more determined towards the threatening
foe.

'Twas Winter-time beside the Rapidan;
'Twas likewise hunger-time and bare-foot time;

'Twas Valley Forge again and ancientry
Of pain and prayer revived on snowy wastes
For them and him who faced with lines of steel
The fast-increasing Northern armament.
So suffering hardship, but unmurmuring,
The Southern legions waited for the Spring.

THE WATCHER ON CLARK'S MOUNTAIN

Upon the ranges of the Blue Ridge mountains
The snow was slowly melting. Down the slopes
The vernal green appeared. The bright wild flowers
'Mid songs of early birds announced the Spring,
And Spring awakening roused the soldier spirit.

Facing each other, with the Rapidan
Between them winding, Nature's barrier,
The two proud armies of the North and South,
Of Grant and Lee, lay waiting eagerly
In their intrenchments what was soon to come,—
For the late hero of Fort Donelson
Had been exalted by the Nation's Head
To the command of all the Federal troops.
Thus the great Masters of high strategy
Confronted each the other—each untried
Against the other's genius and support—
While round them rose a Continent's expectance.

Along a score of miles the troops of Lee
Guarded the south bank of the Rapidan.
Beyond the right wing stretched the Wilderness
With tangled brush and gloomy thickets filled—
Nature's protector to the host in gray.
Upon the summit of Clark's Mountain stood
The Southern Captain viewing with far gaze
The landscape as it stretched to north and east
Before his signal station and his guns.

Oft with fixed glass he swept Culpeper's plains
Scanning the vast encampment of his foe.
Far to the north across the Rapidan,
Back to the Rappahannock's widening stream,
He viewed a city spread of Federal tents,
And o'er the canvas city flags afloat
Midst blue-hued soldiery—an awesome sight.
He saw o'er Meade's headquarters at Culpeper
His purple flag, with golden eagle set
In circling wreath of silver, high afloat,
The while his hastening couriers forth and back
Betokened every movement of the host.
And through the following night—that long full
night—
He saw the Union beacon fires ablaze,

And 'neath their gleam the Federal camp astir.
He thus beholding knew his hour at hand.

Edging the conflict of the Wilderness
Lee set a day of fasting and of prayer
That his brave soldiers might together lift
Their minds and hearts on High for battle
strength,
And meet the approaching crisis rightly armed.

BENEATH A SHEEN OF VICTORIES

WHATSO of shadows Gettysburg had cast,
Now as Lee marked the bristling lines of war,
He stood beneath a sheen of victories.
There to the east was Fredericksburg. The sign
Of his red triumph filled his eyes with light.
And yonder, 'twixt Clark's Mount and Marye's Heights,
Was Chancellorsville whose memories thrilled his soul
With joyance and with sorrow as he gazed—
Joyance for triumph, sorrow for Stonewall's death.
Again he saw the ring of fire, and heard
"Remember Jackson!" borne in waves of cheer.
Close to the right appeared Mine Run where Meade,
When the May woods became November-hued,
Withdrew his troops, not daring to assault.
And there unto the south, behind him spread

The vales where Dahlgren's and Kilpatrick's
    Horse
Met his Gray Cavalry,—and chastisement
For their bold raidings up to Richmond's gates.
Thus in the midst of four great victories
Engirding with their stirring retrospects,
His spirit leaped within him, fierce desire
Clutched at his sword, winged hoofs of steed,
    and tongued
Silence with quick commandings for advance
At the first waving of his signal flag.

THE WAVING OF THE SIGNAL FLAG

It was a morning of high confidence.
The woods were vibrant with the songs of birds
Greeting the fresh May dawn. Likewise Lee's mind
Met Nature's music with a singing hope;
Bright buoyance filled his eyes, gave sustenance
To aspiration as he rose a seer.
The olden friends of Nature now again
Were gathering round him—long-familiar friends—
The thickets, labyrinths, the timbered swamps,
The jungle intricacies, depths complex,
By him long-known, oft-traversed in the past,
But strange, insidious to the Northern Chief.
Therein entrapped, the forces of the foe,
Unwitting regiments, bewildered ranks,
Would meet sure ruin 'mid his circling fires
As they met similar fate at Chancellorsville.

Lee knew his hour. The stealthy messengers
Of Stuart told of Federal cavalry
Near Chancellorsville, and all the Union host
Southwardly swarming. On Clark's Mountain
waved
The expected signal flag. Swift answering,
Gray columns started towards the Wilderness.

THE WILDERNESS: IN THE LABYRINTH

Along the roadways of the selfsame woods
Where Stonewall Jackson made his great flank charge,—
There near the Wilderness Tavern suddenly
The foemen clashed. The fight was terrible.
Through two days fought they in the labyrinth,
Forward and backward, round and round with death,
Wrapped in smoke shrouds, midst onslaught and retreat,
Within the dense waste writhing, seeing scant,
But firing where they caught a foeman's flash,
Until the incessant roll of musketry
Was muted by the cries of anguishment;
While stealthy, lengthening processions passed
Of wounded warriors hastened to the rear;
And all the hazels and the scrub-oaks flushed,
And the dark jungle-glooms turned savagely

Into the lurid glare of holocausts,
Midst tanglements conjoined, incarnadine,
With every thicket crimson, woods and roads
Strewn with the wrecks of carnage, forest mold
Blackened by running scorchings of the storm—
A Saturnalia of fratricide
Upon the strangest battlefield of time.
'Twas first and last of hate's red nondescripts;
Not warrior strategy, but Hell's invention.

OUT OF THE JUNGLE

Fort Donelson's and Vicksburg's conqueror
Had met at last the master-strategist,
And felt, though with three times the larger
host,
The nature of the Army of Virginia,
Which was Lee's own high nature multiplied,
Transfused into his ranks of fighting men—
Their spirits' bread, his generous sympathy;
Their bodies' raiment, boundless faith in him;
So fought they as he ordered, blindly leal;
So fell they reckless round him for his sake;
To fight the fight for him was worth the pain;
To win the day for him was worth the throes;
He was their Country and their Stars and Bars;
He was their Cause and their transcendent
trust;
And this he knew, for he had shaped them thus
By love's pervasiveness and culturing;
And this they knew, for 'neath his sternness hid

The spirit of a tender fatherliness,
That bore them oft in prayer to Christ's great
Heart,
Oft courted sacrifice for their increase,
And shared their fortunes, though it meant the
cross.

Not strange was it they held the jungle waste—
Called "No Man's Land" in earlier history,—
That pair of days against the Union arms.
And well Grant knew that should another day
Add the same measure of assault and loss,
His lines must fall back to the Rapidan,
And follow on the trail of former chiefs—
Dipped flags, bowed faces, and confessed defeat.
So was it on the third day's afternoon
He moved his columns southward from the
woods
Towards Spotsylvania—his goal erstwhile—
Counting the struggle in the Wilderness
Merely the hindering of his strategy
To swing his forces between Lee and Richmond
To meet the Southern Army openly,
And to complete submission "hammer it."—
For never "On to Richmond!" was Grant's
word,

But always the stern charge, "Destroy Lee's
Army!"
He reckoned well that with those legions
crushed,
In one swift moment the Confederacy
Would crumble to inconsequential dust.

SPOTSYLVANIA: THE BLOODY ANGLE

Lee scanned Grant's purpose, and ere Warren's front
Had reached the edge of the Peninsula ridge,
Longstreet had flung his forces cross the path
And fortressed on the Spotsylvanian hills.

Before the Court House stretched the Southern lines,
Facing Grant's Army, fixed and obdurate.
After six days of fighting desperately,
Where Hooker or McClellan would have quailed,
Grant made assault upon the Salient—
"The Bloody Angle" by Virginians named.
There North and South met in the clutch of death.
Five times Lee hurled Gray ranks on ranks of Blue,

And five times met a slaughterous response.
Across the barrier deadly muskets met
Muzzle to muzzle, bayonets clashing loud,
While men sprang frantic on the summit, fired
In one another's faces, courting death.
Maniacs they were, for knowledge of the need
Of triumph in this desperate embrace
Of battle lashed each man of North, of South,
To deeds which elsewhere had been madmen's
signs.

Thus struggled war's demoniacs. Hand to hand
They grappled as they fired, each other dragged
Bleeding and dying under bayonet thrusts
And tearing pistol shots, down, clinched and
linked,
Into the gory trenches. Thus they fought
And fell, and fighting on, and falling, died,
Till all the place turned into shambles vast,
While 'neath the pouring rain and battle smoke,
The woods became a furnace. Breastworks torn,
And lined on either side by duellists,
Counting life naught for sake of taking life,
Were piled with dead on which the living
climbed,
And stood, and fired, and fell. As corals rise,

Mounted on previous insects yielding life,
To rear the islands of Hawaiian sea,
So they, fate's bondmen, climbed and sacrificed,
Building their crimsoned pyramids of dead.
And thus the slain host waxed, the living waned,
And all the while the ghastly horror spread,
And all the while the frenzied combat raged.
Beyond the wild day's end the madmen strove
Into the night with victory unattained.

A MASTER OF STRATEGY

THERE in the Salient at the Bloody Angle,
Amidst the fight, its main controlling force,
Watching with deep intensity of mind
And staggering desperation mixed therewith,
By order, word of cheer, by flashing eyes,
By sword out-flung as 'twere a shaft of flame,
Rode forth and back the Great Confederate,
    Lee,—
The tragic figure of a tragic time.
It passes comprehension that this man,
A paragon of Christian courtesy,
So singularly sweet and sensitive,
So honored and beloved for every grace
Of gentle motives and of kindly deeds
That made the Old School Southern Gentleman,
Who loved the ways of peace and hated war,
Could move so with destruction's purple tides,
The dominant spirit, the commanding head,
In blazing front of battle savagery.

Never in all the seasons of the war
Did captaincy more brilliantly display
Its powers imperious and imperial
Than in the battle of the Wilderness,
And in the bloody fight at Spotsylvania.

COLD HARBOR: GRANT'S TERRIBLE DECISION

THROUGH all that sanguinary month of May
Grant had persistently without avail
Essayed to meet the foes in open field.
And now, just as the gateways of the June—
Virginia's June with all its perfect sweets
Of flowers, of birds, of meadows and of woods—
Opened to Nature's pageantries of peace,
The longed-for battle-hour at last appeared.

Before the Chickahominy which formed
The outer pale of Richmond's strong defense,
With heavy threatening skirmish-lines flung out,
Along the ridges woods and swamps aligned,
The Southern Army stretched, again intrenched,
Inviting the battalions of the North.
And 'twixt the armies twain, set face to face,

Lay the wide open, such as Grant had sought
And Lee had long evaded. To assault—
'Twas certain slaughter of heroic men,
Thousands of men. But if perchance he won,
Then would his enemy, beneath the blow,
Fall back upon the river, and the key
Of the South's Capital become his prize.
And so Grant made his terrible decision.

THE GRAY DEFIER

At early dawn the Army of the North
Began emergence from its rifle pits.
'Tis scarcely possible, so quick it was,
To tell the story. 'Twas a pageant vast
Of blue-tinged marchers, next the heroic charge,
Triumphant leaping over parapets,
Capture of Colors, guns and prisoners,
And then the Southern enfilading fire,
And with it one wide frontal sheet of flame,
And all the field strewn thick with Union dead,—
Ten thousand dead before the sun had risen.

There, midst his smoking guns, the Gray Chief stood;
And all Lee's soul forgot the vision past
Of the predestined end—his shattered dream,
His ashen hopes, and the far solemn strains

Heard upon Seminary Ridge—and felt,
The while he drank the red embattled cup,
The intoxicating wine of victory.
It scarce had passed his lips when forth he drew
His sword,—his spirit's sign in many a fight,—
And lifting it above his ruthless guns,
Avengeful fury in his blazing eyes,
He flung a fresh defiance to his foes.

PETERSBURG AND RICHMOND

Prelude

THE WHITE BATTALIONS

See, they march! Who drives the host?
  Ever thus 'tis form and features
Age on age and ghost by ghost,
  Wheeling columns of High Creatures—
    Wings of flame and eyes of fire—
    Prosper Heaven's far-flung desire,
Love's desire whate'er the cost.

See, they fight! Who sways the test?
  Ever thus 'tis flesh and spirit,
Hour on hour and breast by breast.
  Unto Heaven belongs the merit
    Of the hard-won victory—
    Fetters broken, natures free,
For the shaping of life's best.

THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC: ACROSS THE JAMES

For days the combatants were face to face
Behind their breastworks, while each anxious Chief
Waited the crafty movements of the foe.
At length in secret, midst the darksome night,
The Union Army, swiftly, silently,
Swung loose its vast impediments and men.
'Twas wondrous moving of that Northern host—
Marching and counter-marching in wide swaths,
Crowding the roadways, filling all the fields,
Onward and southward winding by dense woods,
O'er treacherous swamps, along confusing paths,
Through stifling dust, unbaffled by the dark,
And under sunlight blazing, blistering.
'Twas magnitude in motion, bravery

Blue-hued and formidable. Old Virginia
Within her sensive breast had never felt
Such strange vibrations, quakings ominous.
Then of a sudden on a shining morn,
Out of the dust the Federal troops emerged.
It was a pageant most magnifical—
Seven score of thousands moving steadily.

At last Grant's mighty Army, past the James,
Stood on Virginia's storied, civic soil,
And faced towards Richmond and towards
Petersburg.

THE CRISIS OF DESPERATION

Two desperate Captains in a desperate hour;
Two passionate Leaders of two passionate hosts;
Symbols of clamorous North and clamorous South
Arrayed against each other mortally
For the great final conflict! Thus it came—
The crisis. There at Petersburg it came.

Man's blood cried "Failure!" from a deluged earth,
And two great warriors heard, whose lips had bidden
The vast and red adventures. Who could lift
High hands above the dead and triumph claim?
Or who could dare to speak assurance glad
Across a people's woe of North or South?
Where shone the light behind the Southern gloom?

Where rose a pillar of fire in Northern skies?
Where called a Voice amidst the blackened heavens,
"Behold and see salvation from your God!"

Alas for Lee, like Grant, the Desperate!
Within his soul a thousand tongues cried "Never!"
To open battle with outnumbering foe.
Behind his lines—there was the issuance.
In this storm center rose his last defense.
He named the days to come, "The Terribles!"
He was at last shut up in Petersburg,
Not daring open field, but setting trust
On fate, though visioned in his soul as doom,—
As fate, as doom—while midst his suffering ranks,
Ragged and shoeless and by hunger pressed,
He saw its glowering form, and nigh beyond
Viewed his resources as a long array
Of lean and empty-handed pilgrims pass,
Upon him sickly smiling—staggering
Across their vain oblations through war's dust.

Full well Lee knew his great antagonist,
Determined and continuous of aim,

Dauntless of spirit but as desperate
As dauntless. Midst his valiant men he stood
Cheering their hero deeds, while inwardly
Prostrate he lay upon his face before
The God of battles, feeling brazen sky
Inexorable, and the cordon blue
Circling around his bristling lines of gray.

THE VISION OF DESTRUCTION

THROUGH weary battle months, rood after rood,
Grant's Army moved, westwardly, steadily.
Slowly the Blue intrenchments neared the goal.

The great Confederate out of Petersburg
Beheld the enroaching lines of Federals press
His thin ranks backward, cutting one by one
The arteries of his army's strength and hope.
He saw the ominous tide of Sherman's host
From Chattanooga on Atlanta move,—
The Georgian Capital becoming fast
The prize of Northern arms. He heard anear,
Across his lines of trenches stretching close,
The shotted Union guns, a crescent row,
Sounding triumphal thunders of salute.
He witnessed Sheridan's ten thousand Horse

Sweep clear the Valley of the Shenandoah.
He saw emerge Sherman's exultant horde,
All ready for its whirlwind seaward march—
Its eastward turning, its wide swath of wreck,
Its far resistless sweep of ravagement,
Georgia become a zone of desolateness
'Twixt the Confederacy's dissevered ends,
And fair Savannah flaunting to the sea
The Stars and Stripes before Lee's sorrowing
heart.

As though o'erlooking midst perspective mount,
He saw from Petersburg 'neath other shades,
Again the "Rock of Chickamauga" loom,
Hood's Army routed, his invasive storm
On Tennessee a failure ruinous,
And Nashville held in grip of Federal guns
Sealing the fate of the South's western arms.
For him it was a grievous Christmastide,
As Nashville and Savannah, war-worn gifts,
Graced waiting Destiny's Lincolnian hands
Upon the salvers of victorious ranks.
Savannah fallen; proud Columbia
In flames; fair Charleston, ruins wrapped in
smoke;
And the bright Carolinian fields of wealth

Become vast wastes beneath the Victor's feet,—
All these he saw; and felt about his heart
The tightening cordon of impending doom,
Around his valiant army chains of fire,
And all the Southern dream turned dust and
ashes.

THE VISION OF DISINTEGRATION

Lee saw moreover at the Capital—
Richmond, Virginia's and his heart's beloved—
Confusion rising midst politic lords;
Denunciations of the government,
His own Confederate government and head;
Threats of the Cotton States to break their vows—
Vows of allegiance to Secession sworn—
If hearths and homes had not more sure defense;
The claims of seaports for acknowledgment
Equal to Richmond's; and refusal wide
To yield obedience to the drafts of war
That sabered many a hope and aspiration.
He viewed the passion of Secession wane,
And waning, weaken all the binding cords
Betwixt the people and their Army—his.
He knew intensely that the South was not
As yet a nation, even though her lips

Thundered her purpose cross the flames of war.
Full well he knew if the fierce passion failed
That forced secession, then resistlessly
The wanderers would slip back into the Home
To which, as Lincoln claimed, they still be-
    longed.
And they, because the widowing winds of war
Were blowing off illusion's lowering clouds
About the peaks of reason, wanted less
The sodden fruitage of exploited strife,
And more the orchardings of lasting peace
And golden harvestings of brotherhood.

The Winter raged, and round Lee and his
    troops
The rains and snows of dreary days and nights
Fell pitiless, while 'mid their trenches bare,
His men in rags, nigh starved, their bodies
    racked
Upon the wheels of sickness and of pain,
Endured because their Captain lived and moved
Among them, drinking from their bitter cup,
Their hard lot his, their sacrificial life
Accepted as his own. Thus side by side
They suffered, and his comprehending eyes
Beheld their desperate and approaching end.

And after Winter, Spring. The new life rose
From Nature's heart, and through her burgeoning frame,
Responsive verdure, answering birds, glad songs
Of loosened rivulets, the odorous breath
Of winds bloom-saturate, and the deep gleam
Of Old Virginia's skies and fields and woods.
Joy clamored from the subtle throat of Beauty,
And all the air was filled with music,—choirs
That sounded peace on earth, good will to men.

The Mighty Captain saw life's green and gold,
And heard the antiphonal bugles of the Spring.
He sensed through smoke, perceived o'er thundering guns,
And felt with passionate grief the terrible hour,—
Richmond encircled by remorseless foes,
Confederate regiments to leanness come,
Disunion's dowry to a fragment shrunk,
The Southland's ravaged fields, her blighted grain,
Her acres, wasted 'neath embattled feet,
Refusing bread unto her brave defenders.

He viewed the spectacle of ruin pass;
Across the Roanoke Blue legions massed;
Beyond the Carolinas Union hosts
United, irresistible. The gates
Of life were closing under knells of fate.
The strident openings of strange abysms
Rasped the dark edges of his trenches doomed.
Richmond and Petersburg—he saw them falling,
And all the Southland's bannered bastions falling,
And falling, falling, all Secession's hopes.

THE VISION OF DESTINY

LINCOLN'S SECOND INAUGURAL

LINCOLN, the great Republic's luminous front,
With new confirming of the people moved
Re-chosen and re-consecrate, and flung
Shadows of apprehension and despair
Along the pathway of Secession's armies.

Beyond the intrenching lines round Petersburg
The Southern soldiers heard the Northern
troops
Greeting the Inauguration with loud cheers.
And though defiance clung to bristling arms,
The dauntless spirits of the Confederates
Felt the on-coming darkling certainty.
And over all the ceaseless cannonry
And the incessant flash of musketry,

The awesome soul and the prophetic voice
Of Lincoln through his second Inaugural
Sounded in one the voices of all souls
That felt the rising tides of destiny
Resistless and inviolate as the sea.

The Mighty Captain saw prophetic hand
Writing across the heavens against the dark
The fiery uncials fate interpreted.
The Second Inaugural framed exterior phrase
Of the interior coursings of Lee's mind
Through months incarnadine. A man of God
By faith and by surrender could he miss
The inflowing tides of Providential Will
Beating against the shore-line of events?
And could he fail to know, when high lights fell
Across the skies, the Presence and the Power?

High lights had fallen. Justice was not less
Because of love. Nor was love less because
Of judgment, love's expression self-compelled.
Throughout his sensive nature Lee discerned
"God saith" behind the Second Inaugural;
And Lee was God's enough to understand.
'Twas that which later his proud spirit heard
At Appomattox when the flinty rock

Of ancient custom and imperious mood
Was smitten with the rod of kindliness,
And forth the living waters gushed and spread
With satisfying virtue every waste;—
At Appomattox when the victor's lips
Breathed the keynote of Christian charity,
And all the earth was flushed with the New Day.

Had not Lee deprecated Slavery,
Disunion and the arbitrament of War?
Had he not drawn his sword against his will
As truly as against the Nation's will
And his and her strong voices of dissent?
And daily from Seven Pines to Petersburg,
Had he not augured the predestined end
By all the laws of Nature's Decalogue?
Never had he believed that Southern arms
Alone could win the conflict. Well he knew
The force gigantic of the Northern States
Would surely crush at last Secession's strength
Unless some Foreign Power should intervene.
But such consideration made with him
No difference. The South had principles
And rights most sacred to defend and hold,
And Duty bound him to his best essay
Even though he perished in the vain attempt.

Thus was his soul's philosophy declared
By his own lips with solemn utterance
Across the great Surrender's nearing verge,
And lastingly inscribed on history's page.

He knew the chronicles of centuries,
And the stern law that retribution full
Must fall on every creature set against
Dominion of the Spiritual Order.
But never in the past had he conceived
As now the astounding vastness of events,
God's thought, Love's purpose, Truth's exceeding power,
Compulsion of eternal strategies
To save a world on self-destruction bent.

LEE AND LINCOLN

They were great souls transcendent of events,
Lincoln and Lee. Across embattled fields
Both Lee and Grant were Captains front to front
Upon the levels where men's arms were steel,
Where instruments of strife were flesh and blood—

Material forces for material ends.
But Lee and Lincoln were antagonists
Above the plane of wonted armaments.
They faced each other from opposing heights
Of spirit, full-equipped with weaponry
Shaped in the Armory of Providence
And given to each by the Invisibles
That frame the mystic goings forth of power
For sake of or against the ethical
And basic harmonies of history.
Into this high arena of the spirit
Could enter none of lesser psychic mold—
Nor Grant nor Davis—only they alone
Who feeling after the hid mind of God
Above earth's clouds and darkness, had perceived
The White Battalions' mediate pageantry.

They were great souls—those seers of destiny,
Who heard the music of the Morning Stars
And the far shoutings of the Sons of God—
Lincoln and Lee. And thus at last they stood
Upon the mountains as the New Day dawned,
Over against each other, face to face,
Dissevered by contending principles,
But in their ordered places situate—

Perceiving by a forced enlightenment
That history is the judgment of the world—
And working out together swervelessly
The Will of God that rode the battle thunders.

THE FULNESS OF TIME

When Lee beheld the Nation's Chief draw forth
His Second Inaugural Sword of living flame,
His two-edged sword of Justice and of Mercy,
And flash Truth's awesome lightnings cross
the world,
He saw as he had never seen before
The approaching end, the fulness of the time.

Justice and Mercy! History's Covenants!
The Eternal Symbols of Theocracy
That give's Democracy its certain life!

Sensing the Power behind the Inaugural,
Lee felt the ceremonial aftermath
Take to itself, as from the heavenlies,
A new and sanctified significance.
He saw the great Re-chosen of the people
With regnant hand uplifted reverently,

With fervent lips pressing the Sacred Page,
And swearing faithfully to execute
His office, and preserve, protect, defend
The Constitution of the United States.

The Holy Scriptures and the Constitution,
The two great Charters of Democracy,
The two supreme defenses of the people!

And Lee, though distant yet more finely near
Than all his Southern peers, beheld unblanched
The tempest-tossed Confederate Ship of State
Dashing to pieces on the rocks of war.
He knew the fulness of the time had come—
God's time, the Nation's, and likewise his own,
High Love's and Wisdom's and the trembling South's.
And yet he trembled not, knowing himself
God's, and remembering the compulsive Power—
Resistless though it seemed resistible—
That spoke in still small voice where thunder flame
Had shaken the mountains, laid the valleys waste,

And whelmed with red confusion sun and
stars—
The still small voice that mystically broke
Heaven's silence midst the earth's discordances.

IN THE MAJESTY OF CONSECRATION

THUS stood Lee forth before Virginia's lords
Faithful to his commission and his sword,
Doing the Will of God while seemingly
Lifting high hands against the Stars and
    Stripes.
Thus stood he forth reckoned among the
    spheres,
That in their courses fought against the South,
As of the White Battalions. Thus he stood
Unquestioning—this wondrous battle-chief,
This convenantal man of faith and courage,
Sworn to Virginia, erstwhile sworn to God,
And evermore as erstwhile sworn to God.

His was the secret past all mortal phrase.
Within the leashes of the Eternal Plan
He moved, the unconfounded. Who could
    know
How long through generations yet to come

Might Slavery have lasted, had this bolt,
Formed slowly in the ethical order of God,
Not burst upon the earth? Yet well Lee knew—
Since 'twas the loosening of this bolt of war—
Secession was the doom of Slavery,
And that to deal Secession mortal blow
Would kill the things that clung to it for life—
States-Rights and Slavery—swallowed up of death.
Thus would salvation come unto the lost
Turned self-deliverers, though they knew it not.
But Lee knew, and in his perceiving soul,
Seeing the strategies of Providence,
There rose a stronger courage and a hope
Gripping a faultless righteousness and power,
And all the consonant joy for North and South
Forevermore united. Come what might,
'Twas all the expression of the Will Divine.
Walking by faith he ever trod the ways
Magnifical upon God's shining mounts.
Come triumph or defeat, no power could touch
His great unconquerable soul; no fate
Could snatch from him his inner victory
Which, pillared amidst every failure, stood

Round his unfailing spirit. Thus he endured,
The Mighty Captain. Evermore endures,
As seeing Him who is invisible,
Each nature that has faith allegiant
To God and Duty. Though his armies fail,
And foes rush in o'er ruin and o'er waste,
He stands unruined and unwasted, king
In the high majesty of consecration.

And there at Petersburg behind his lines,
Midst sight of destiny and shafts of fate,
Midst strong compulsions, long his fastnesses,
Lee rose, beholding down the Northern skies
The White Battalions wheeling, lifted up
His spirit unto God's Imperials,
And turned untowards the open and the void,
Whirlwind and fire, and after that—the night.

FIVE FORKS: PICKETT AND SHERIDAN

And soon began the whirlwind and the fire.
From all directions gathering Union troops
Were circling closer the Confederates.
Cyclonic swirl and blast of lurid rage—
The spirit of Sheridan in man and steed—
Were towards one goal converging. Lee beheld
And wrought by vision. From his trenches round
He moved his veterans westward. How 'twas fought,
That final combat at Five Forks! How gain
Graced Sheridan's hot Horse! How Pickett's troops
Were swept in dire confusion from the field,
And guns and colors of Lee's great right wing

Strewed reddened battle-roads with trailing
    wrecks,
The while the Gray Commander, overwhelmed
With anguish, faced the dark and ominous
    hour!

And yet that anguish, then and afterward,
Was but expression of immediate thought
Under the press of time's commandery,
And stress of duty sworn to be performed.
But anguish lightened when the inner springs
Of the high nature, loosened by the laws
Of centuried evolvement lifting truth,
Forced up the glory o'er mind's darkling front,
And rhythms through sinews and historic
    blood.

PETERSBURG'S ABANDONMENT

At eventide Lee stood and viewed his fate,
Struck with strange rigors by confounded host.
And through the night, calm midst a wild
despair,
While every Union cannon roared and blazed,
He waited for the morning,—storming arms
And swarming blue-hued victors pitiless.

Feeling the day's adventures close at hand,
Full-uniformed, wearing his priceless sword,
Arrayed as for a hero's dress parade,
Bearing a triumph spirit midst retreat,
The Southern Chieftain watched advancing foe
As with the early light it surged across
His outer works. Then mounting Traveler,
Scarcely escaping the unresting fire,
He spurred his horse back to the inner lines
Before the cheerings of his soldiery—
The flush of cheek, the flash of eye, his wont

In crucial moments at his spirit's height,
Betokening imperious defiance.

As night closed round the City of Petersburg,
The prison city of a terrible year,
Towards which were rolling now Blue waves
of doom,
In silence Lee rode forth leading his troops,
A long procession of Gray desperates,
Into the dark, along the road that stretched
On to Amelia Court House. Suddenly
A little distance out, he stopped his horse,
Dismounted, and there stood, the bridle rein
Taut in his hand, and gazed upon his men
As in the gloaming they strode ruefully
Forth from the city 'neath the shades of death,
Beginning flight forlorn across the open.

The time that Lee withdrew his shattered
ranks
From Petersburg through all that April
night—
That Sabbath night of great historic grief,
His bulwarks captured and his lines forspent,
Behind him ruin irretrievable—
The Federal Army slowly entered in,

And marshalled in review before the eyes,
The prideful eyes of their commanding Chiefs,
With triumph's joyance in their every move,
And fury reaching forth towards fleeing foe.
The Union legions crossed the captured town
To follow Lee in quick and hot pursuit.

THE BURNING OF THE CAPITAL

Upon that selfsame day of bitterness,
That April Sabbath, Richmond, likewise doomed,
Beheld her hour of judgment drawing near.

The hallowed stillness turned to loud uproar
Within the Southern Capital so long
Protected by Lee's men against all foes.
The streets were thronged with clamorous multitudes
Bent on escape. With the approach of night
Tumult and terror reigned. The populace,
Beholding the fast-fleeing lords of state,
And hearing wide alarms, turned fugitive.
Insane conjestion filled the turbulent dark;
Fear with increasing turmoil seized the town.
Mobs gathered in the streets, and violence

Raged recklessly—the spirit of lawlessness
Fed by the spirit of famine. Everywhere
Wild riot rolled wild panic as it swept
Rising to fierce debauchery and crime.
Midst shameless horrors added horrors rose
More shameless, as 'twere blasts disrupt from
Hell.
The later night reddened with fiery rents,
Exploding Arsenal and powder stores,
Shells bursting without reason or excuse
As though discharged by madmen or by fiends.
These, with a myriad founts of thunder mixed,
Havocked the City, shaking hearts of men.
Ewell, the martial guardian of the town,
Was blowing up the Ironclads in the James,
Was firing bridges, starting holocausts,
And swinging open wide the gates of rage.
A thousand homes were burning; sacred fanes
And civic structures were fast cindering;
In quenchless and consuming sweep of flame
The City's heart was burning down to dust.
A hideous mingling of discordant tongues,
Crying of children, women's wild laments,
Old age bemoaning life and time and fate,
Fierce yells of ruffians, threats of pillagers,

And maddened shrieks and curses filled the air.
Richmond's defenders were in headlong flight;
Their cause was scattering on fiery winds;
And God was hidden behind a blazing sky.

THE PAGEANT OF DELIVERANCE

Into the surge of fury, Cavalry,
Wearing the Nation's Blue, abruptly moved,
Followed by serried troops. Victors they were,
But saviors and deliverers fighting flame,
Feeding and healing and proclaiming peace.
With steady tramp the Union soldiers marched
Through the main thoroughfare with flying flags,
Drums beating out the passion of their hearts.
Up to the Capital they strode, and raised
Old Glory where had waved the Stars and Bars;
They sprang upon the swiftly spreading fire
With the old fierceness that whelmed belching guns,
While Libby Prison and Castle Thunder felt
The deep vibration of decisive feet,
And open flung their gates of misery
Delivering sons of Freedom to their own.

Along the streets of terror and of woe,
Lincoln, the Emancipator-President,
Walked slowly, while about him multitudes
Of his redeemed, black-faced but white of soul,
Bowed as in worship, hailing him their savior,
And crying, shouting, singing, "Glory, Glory!"
"Glory to God!" and "Glory Hallelujah!"

LEE'S SPIRIT AT RICHMOND'S GATES

LEADING his fleeing host Lee looked behind,
Seeing the lurid clouds, hearing the roar,
Feeling the ravage of the City doomed.
And as he gazed, his rueful heart crept back,
Crept back o'er red and wildering ways of death,
And bowed at Richmond's gates midst fire and gloom,
Bleeding and wondering before High God.

But God had not forgotten. Though most high
He dwells most low with them of humble spirit.
The sparrows' God was Lee's. The One who marks
The birds inconsequent and guides their ways
Had heart and eyes upon His troubled own,
His mystic messenger of destiny.

And as Lee's lone and agonizing soul
Bowed broken at the burning City's gates,
And love was seeking vainly o'er the swath
Of fiery turbulence and foemen's feet
The heart of yore, the home of yesterday,
A Union aide rode down a Richmond street,
Enlisting men to stay the spreading flames,—
The conflagration that with mouths of fire
Was eating out the City's throbbing heart.

As on he rode, forth from an open house
A servant rushed and vehemently called
For him to halt and see his troubled mistress.
The aide dismounted. At the mansion's door
A Southern maiden met him. Terror gloomed
Her pale and beauteous face. With passionate words
She flung her spirit forth imploringly—
Her mien betokening high ancestry,
Her anguished voice commanding while it begged,—
"Would he not save her mother from the flames,
Her helpless mother from the fiery storm
Which swept with rabid violence towards her door?"

True soldiers fight with men, but never clash
With Nature's chivalry when woman calls.
Old Glory! Thou hast ever led the way
Over all bars to knightly charity.
It was Old Glory's ambulance that came,
As by a miracle of summoning,
Responsive to a Northern soldier's heart,
And bore the Southern matron safely forth.
And they who took her 'neath the Stars and Stripes
Out from the pathway of the striding flame,
Found—'twas a joyful and a prideful thing—
The invalid was the wife of General Lee,
And she who asked the favor was his daughter.

High God, whose children are past numbering,
All for their sakes and His great covenant,
Hath troops of love and comfort at His hest,
And in that hour dispatched a Company
Of Holy Ones to guard the Mighty Chief—
Perchance the White Battalions of His power.
And while Lee fled, and Richmond burned, his soul
Rose out of anguish, knowing the covenant peace,
The peace of God that passeth understanding.

The universe is one vast ether-space
For God's great wireless system. Who has faith
And yields his spirit to the Spirit Divine,
Shall have Love's messages out of the heavens,
And know that God the Father ne'er forgets,
But daily sends His living answers down
Along the shining stairways of the dark,
To every call of true obedience,
To every cry of His unfortunates.
So comes the peace of God which came to Lee.
So knows each trusting soul, as knew Lee's soul,
The Father's Voice midst a discordant world.

Prelude

THE LOST CAUSE

The earth is cursed with evilness,
  Through which the Spirit of the Good
Works sagely and with power to bless
  The years misunderstood.
    O doubting hearts,
      O blinded eyes,
    The storm disparts,
      The darkness dies,
The dawn springs up with light's redress,
  And earth takes on Heaven's likelihood!

Though strange compulsion speaks for Hate
  Behind time's wildering waste of things,
Its strident tongue is dulcet mate
  To Love's that ever sings.

Believing souls,
  Attending ears,
The music rolls
  Across the years,
The larger joy claims grief's estate,
  And earth knows Heaven's recoverings!

THE ROUT OF THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

'Twas swift pursuit that followed the swift flight
Of Lee's retreating Army westward driven.
'Twas hot pursuit increasing in hot rage.
The Mighty Captain in the open now
Felt Nature's sweet elixirs, and his men—
Treading again the Old Dominion soil,
Its woods and fields in all their Springtime bloom—
Joined brightness to his brightness as they fled,
And fleeing fought, and fighting onward passed
Along the margin of the Appomattox.

They reached at length Amelia Court House, spent
With weariness and hunger. There they found
No stores as promised,—yet they forward moved

In their long-losing and despairing flight,
Grant's guns behind them with increasing
scourge.
They felt the fiery cordon drawing close
As on they strove. But yet the resolute will
Forsook them not. They fled, they stood, they
charged;
Then overpowered, again they fled for life,
Their spirits unconquered, but defiant still
And daring fate and fate's hard-pressing
legions.

The wild rush widened over hill and vale;
The whole Virginian Army, routed now,
Left all the ways behind with wreckage strewn.
Along the road o'ertoppled wagons blazed,
Fired to escape the foe. About the rear
The ammunition trains, quick-lighted, rent
The air with loud explosions. Worn and starved
But staggering forward, men dropped weaponry
In sheer exhaustion and bewilderment,
Longing to die, and falling upon death;
And all the while the roaring of Grant's guns
And the advancing surge of Federal hosts
Drove them yet madly on. As morning dawned,
Starting that April day inglorious,

With the last charge audacious of Gray troops,
The bold Confederates gazed in ghastly awe
Upon the Union lines of Infantry
Spread thickly over valley, hill, and road,
With bayonets ranged and ready for assault.
Lee's veterans halted in amazed recoil—
Halted and gazed, seeing the portent loom
Running along the bristling musketry.
Then suddenly above the Southern ranks—
Those battered, tattered ranks of veterans—
A white flag rose and caught the April breeze.
The end was nearing, doom had come at last.

WORSE THAN A THOUSAND DEATHS

The morning of that memorable day
When Gordon's flag of truce bespoke the end,
Upon a plain surrounded by green hills,
Lee's Army stood o'ertaken in its flight.
The Union forces gathered circlewise
On every hilltop, planting batteries,
And covering every slope with threatening troops
Ready to slaughter their imprisoned foes,
Waiting to seal Confederate rout with blood.

But Grant revolted from the massacre
That opened to him. Though "The Butcher" named,
His kindly heart halted his sworded hand,
And swift dispatchment to the Southern Chief
Saved further onslaught, shaping ways of peace.

Upon Lee's soul a whelming sadness fell,
As there between the wings of Grant's array
He saw the war-worn remnant of his men
Caught and set round by ruthless lines of steel.
'Twas in that moment that surrender dread,
Spurned yesterday, became a fiery bolt
Instant, compulsive, tearing through his heart.
A cry of anguish swept his quivering lips.
He would the rather die a thousand deaths
Than go to his victorious enemy.

His weighting woe turned into evil lure.
How easily by riding down the lines,
A target for his foeman's wary watch,
He might end all and enter into rest.
So thought he as he gazed in desperateness.
But he was Duty's covenant servitor;
To live, not die, was her supreme command.
What wide and dire disaster would befall
The women and children of the South,
If he their sworn protector, failed them now!
The doubt and sadness vanished. Light that comes
With vows to Duty shone upon his face;
And Duty said, "Surrender, it is right."

Unwelcome Duty manacled to Pain
Only the bravest follow, flinching not.
Duty he followed, as she sternly led
Into the yawning Valley of Dust and Ashes.

THE NINTH OF APRIL

UNDER an apple tree beside the road
They found the Mighty Captain quietly
Waiting the further issue of the morning—
The Sabbath morning of the Ninth of April,
Palm Sunday facing Love's great Eastertide,
God's day at Appomattox Court House, name
Forever blazoned in Time's Hall of Peace.
Quick closing every channel of his pride
Lee rose to greet the envoys of his foe,
And with them rode unto the place of meeting.

It was a simple meeting unsurpassed
In all the ages for significance.
Within a Southern farmhouse near at hand
The great contestants sat in conference.
Each saw the gateway of the other's soul
Swing open and a strange procession pass

Of faith's indulgences, of hope's high yields,
Humiliation rising from the dust,
Submission standing 'twixt Love's priests and
    seers
In the embrace of Magnanimity.

THE WILL FOR PEACE

WHAT prayers importunate had stormed the heavens
Loosing the Angels of Benignity,
Or what far Breath had swept the morning sky
Filling the April winds with tumult sweet—
Nor dream nor story tells. But one high will,
The will for peace after the will for war,
Man's wiser will, was moving on the earth,
Fronting the vistas of the world's New Day.

They rose to part; and standing face to face
Within the circle of their battle-peers,
And at the threshold of life's roomier prime,
They symboled two contrasting periods;
They framed the ancient and the modern times—
The ancient age of Aristocracy,
The modern era of Democracy,
The Old recoiling on its hastened doom

Before the bannered advent of the New.
And there the Heavenly Spirit, brooding, moved
Again upon the face of darkling wastes,
And all the clangorous heralds of God's Hour
Sounded Love's holy chimes of Liberty
And Union ringing round a waiting world.

THE GRAY CAVALIER

TALL and erect the Mighty Captain stood
Before his victor, now his countryman
By grace of nobleness. Full-uniformed
And decorate with his rank's insignia,
His golden-hilted sword, Virginia's gift
Unto her favorite Son and chosen Chief,
Hanging beside him, sheathed in mystic flame;
He seemed the South's illustrious bodiment
Of triumph, not defeat. Yet as he stood—
The Battle-Soul of the Confederacy
Become a wraith among historic Shades—
Across his brow and o'er his war-worn face
In waves of pride and pride's repressed estate,
The lights of resignation rose and fell,
The while impiercing eyes and stately frame
Betokened his unconquerable soul.
There was a something in his dignity
Which only comes out of the rifted heavens
To man upon his knees. Thus stood he there

Throneless and crownless, thrall of destiny,
And yet the South's true King inviolate
High-towering midst her desperateness and
ruin.

THE BLUE VICTOR

Love's full forgiveness following man's surrender
Is God's fixed seal of goodness. Who forgives
Full-souled is Godlike, and his deed becomes
The watchword of innumerous Sons of Light
Who guard earth's tents about the gates of Heaven.

In that high hour the great Blue Captain won
His noblest triumph and his brightest crown.
Simple and humble, the true conqueror,
He met his vanquished foe with chivalrous grace
Betokening high spirit. Without display,
Without an accent but of kindliness,
He grasped the hand of the defeated Chief,
And through it sent his nature's finest passion—
The Nation's likewise, Lincoln's and the Christ's—

Into the soul of Lee and the South's soul.
"Brother!"—and all the lights of Heaven
    leaped up,
And Life's new song went ringing down the
    sky,
Swords turned to plowshares 'neath the touch
    of Love,
And spirits of a million martyrs crowned—
No more man's "Blue" or "Gray," but God's
    own White—
Saw, heard, and bivouacked on the heights of
    joy,
Chanting the dawning of the Age of Peace.

THE SORROWFUL ARMY

Forth from the house the Mighty Captain passed
Slowly and solemnly before a group
Of earnest blue-clad watchers. Every head
Bowed silently to show him reverence.
But little noting, for a space he paused
And waited the quick bridling of his horse,
His sad eyes gazing towards his distant troops,
His hands together striking, as 'twere pain
And grief commingling racking soul and flesh.
Then mounting Traveler, and answering
With lifted hat the generous salutes,
He rode away to tell the fateful tale
Unto his soldiers biding his return.

When once again he faced his vanquished troops,

A shout of welcome rang through all the ranks.
Then shouting died away and a deep hush
Fell on the host, while every brow was bared
And the Gray thousands wept. And as he rode
Along the lines his soldiers pressed him close
To touch him, to lay hand upon his horse,
To show in some sweet way their sympathy.
Then his great spirit into tumult leaped—
Such tumult as but love in weakness stirs
As it goes reeling down abysmal deeps
When 'twould have scaled the heavens with
its own.

Bare-headed, while his face was wet with tears,
With quivering lips he bade his men be strong—
His men, who at his word had bravely dared
The fields of fury and the swaths of death,—
His men, who at his word had nobly gone
With him into the Valley of Dust and Ashes.
Thus rode he past, and into tumult turned
Like to his own thousands of anguished hearts.
As one by one he took their outstreched hands
And with moist eyes gazed on each lifted face,
His soul burst into definite utterance,—
"Men, we have fought together through the
war,

And I have done the best I could for you."
As a great wave advancing towards the shore
Reaches its height, then poising tremblingly
Falls back in one wild crush of spray and foam,
So the emotion of the Mighty Chief
Rising to this high voicing of his heart
For very anguish broke. He could no more.

BEYOND DAWN'S RIM

It was a scene of manhood at its height.
It was a great love-act of breaking hearts.
'Twas bravery once to follow where he led
Into war's furnace flames. 'Twas bravery now,
Of sort the larger, to obey his hest
And back return into the ways of peace.
Some saw the Morning Star across the dark,
And the New Day beyond the gray dawn's rim.
Some caught a vision of the future years,
The red way of the past become the white,
Love's very white—no more nor North nor South—
The exalted way of one America.
But they were all the Army of Virginia,
Lee's men, and love for him did all his will,
And God's—for Lee was God's—and they obeyed.

And there was silence half an hour in Heaven
Among the Watchers at the Gates of Light—

The Martyr Watchers from earth's crowded
fields—
As once again, midst Lee's surrendered host,
The two great Captains on their battle steeds—
The issues of the South and of the North
And the World's destiny upon their lips—
Conversed, and parted understandingly.
And each was nobler for the other's mood,
And gentleness of soul that makes men great;
And a new song of praise arose in Heaven
From the vast throngs of war's ascended Ones
And the White Angels playing on their harps.

THE LAST PARADE

The soul of Lee became diffusive soul.
And as a forest fire in summertime
Leaps forward with quick bounds from brush
    to brush,
So swept his spirit the spirits of his men,
His brave surrender growing swiftly theirs.

It was a scene touched hearts of Blue and Gray,
When Federal firing of salutes was hushed,
And General Chamberlain received the yield
Of Southern arms and colors,—when the ranks
Struck tents, seized muskets, lifted up their
    flags,
Marched forth to sound of bugle, and the line
Of waiting Federals came to "Carry arms,"
Thus greeting their defeated countrymen.

Brave Gordon heard the shifting musketry
With its fine meaning, wheeled superbly
    round—

He and his horse a beauteous silhouette
Against the April blue—and gallantly
Saluting dropped his sword's point to his boot;
Then facing his command again gave word
To his brigades to pass in manual mode,
Honor thus answering honor of brave men.

For the last time parading, at a sign
They stacked their guns, against them set their flags—
Some kissing reverently the drooping folds
So long their beacons through the storms of strife—
And one by one in silence moved away
Across the wastes of war and vanquishment.
To see those tattered battle-banners trail
About surrendered muskets, deadly once,
Now impotent; to see heroic men,
The last of the Confederate soldiery,
The remnant of Lee's Army of Virginia,
Now ragged, hungry, helpless file away,—
Away by thousands, slowly, sadly file,—
Back to their bivouacs inglorious,
Companioned by the specters of defeat—

'Twas sight that brought to every witnesser
Upon the frontier line of victory
Tears unto eyes and quivers unto lips
And an unwonted clutching at the heart.

THE BLUE AND THE GRAY

And over every other chivalry
There rose the reverence of the Union men—
No sound of trumpet more, no roll of drum,
No cheer, no whispered word, no glorying note,
But an awed stillness rather, and men's breaths
Holding as at the passing of the dead.

And when the news of the Surrender reached
The Council Chamber of the White House, where
The President was with his Cabinet
In solemn conference,—at Lincoln's word
All fell upon their knees and offered up
In silence and in tears their heartfelt thanks
Unto the Heavenly Father for the event.

And Lee, who quickly felt Love's highest tides
As one by one they slipped from azures far

Down holy sweeps of sweetness and of light,
Perceived the same compulsion and became,
Knowing not time nor space, participant
Of tears and silence and a sense of grace.

Prelude

THE MARTYR SIGN

Against the sky two warring wills—
  God's Will and man's—together meet.
Thus comes the Cross, thus Nature fills
  With ruin round Creation's feet.
O Sin, what awful deed was thine
To darken earth with such a sign?

Beyond the Cross there looms the blue—
  The shining blue above the earth.
By this far lure Life passes through
  The arms of Death to larger worth.
O Soul, upon thy cross impaled,
Fear not! Likewise the Christ was nailed.

And thou, Truth's martyr—following Him
  Vicarious,—findest crown of thorn,
Scourge, spike and spear, hate's watchers grim,
  The day turned night by rage and scorn?
'Tis only on some Calvary
That love for men can make men free.

THE RETURN TO RICHMOND

The selfsame day Lee started back to Richmond
Leaving his Army. Round him sorrowing
His soldier comrades, now disbanded, thronged.
And as their stately Leader midst them rode,
With brow uncovered and with misty eyes,
Bowing his last farewells, they stood a-hush,
Bareheaded, broken-hearted, and in tears,
Knowing that they should see his face no more;
Knowing that they should hear his voice no
more.
Oh what a silence, what a line of watchers!
Oh what a weeping of strong men of war
Bidding their Hero Chief goodbye for aye!
Oh what a passing of a Mighty Captain!

Upon the morrow midst a group of Horse
Dusty from travel, downcast from defeat,
The vanquished General slowly rode away,
While all along the road the people stood—

Stood like his soldiers with deep reverence
And mournful gaze, love murmurous following
Behind his form, and prayers articulate
Ascending heavenward from the lips of Grief.

And thus he trailed the Valley of Dust and
    Ashes
Greeting with careworn face and sinking heart
His people whom he cherished, for whose life
His had been offered up. And thus he passed
Out from the vision of the populace
Into the sanctuary of his home.

And they, his soldiers, who had followed him
Four battle years along Secession's ways
All registered with red and tortuous tracks,
Now having bade their Chief beloved farewell,
Departed every whither, slowly back,
Back to the Father's House. And as they went
They saw the New Day dawning on the
    heights,
And all the Valley of Dust and Ashes breaking
To wondrous bloom and verdure 'neath their
    feet.

And they, his people, who had followed him,
Him and his Army likewise, though afar,
With anxious hopes, with multitudinous prayers,
From every watchtower of expectant hearts,
When his Gray Form had vanished from their sight,
And the procession turned to memory's shades,
Traversed the selfsame Valley of Dust and Ashes,
And marvelled at the music from the hills.

GOOD FRIDAY'S SPELL

It was Good Friday as Lee drew near Richmond
And tented for the night beside the road
Under the April stars. That April day,
That April night,—the fourteenth day and night!
Full well he knew that on that radiant noon
The valiant Anderson had proudly raised
Above Fort Sumter's ruins the Union Flag,
The selfsame Stars and Stripes Secession's hands
That very hour four years before had lowered,
Lifting into its place the Stars and Bars.
His sensive spirit heard the burning words
That rose beneath Old Glory's wind-swept folds,
The thunders of the people and the guns,
And the far echoes rolling round the world.
And somehow Lee was glad albeit he grieved;

And somehow he rejoiced despite the pain.
Such souls as know the White Battalions
Have understanding,—and Lee understood.

It was Good Friday. Oft that afternoon
His thoughts were far away at Calvary.
It was in April that the Christ was slain;
And this was April and Good Friday's dusk.
He halted for the night—historic night;
Again he saw the little knoll of death,
The throngs, the soldiers, and the Man of Sorrows
Nailed to the Cross and dying for mankind.
Through his fine soul the Angels of Remembrance
Were chanting Handel's aria,—"Behold
And see if there be any sorrow like
Unto His Sorrow!"—He was comforted.
All his afflictions seemed but as a drop
Beside the ocean of his Lord's afflictions.
The anguish of the Christ engulfed his own,
And in it he found Love's vicarious grace.
Thus passed the far day's music and its mood
Into the mood and music of his heart.
And he was comforted. In that high hour
Of contemplation of Redemption's Cross

His own took on a holy ministry,
And all the voices of his spirit cried—
"My Saviour suffered, why should not I
suffer?"—
Thus on him fell God's peace. At last he slept.

REGIMENTS OF DARKNESS

His sleep was but a brief and fitful thing.
Soon he awakened startled. All about
He felt a strange and tragic atmosphere.
Again he saw the Christ upon the Cross
And the slain Form against the lurid sky.
It was the murder of the Pure and Good
By the world's blinded, understanding not
The motives of His Soul—His gentleness,
His zeal for truth and right, forgiveness sweet,
Close fellowship with God, and sacrifice
Of self for duty, charity supreme
In action and in generous words of grace.
It was the slaughter by the lawless world
Of its best Friend—his very own best Friend,
One whose o'erbrooding Spirit touching his
Had been his daily strength and comforting.

In the night hours beneath the April sky,
With the Good Friday's spell upon his soul,
Somehow he felt as 'twere a present deed,

As though upon the Cross the world's best
  Friend
Again were being nailed by violent hands,
His life an offering for others' sakes.
And all the lowering of the night increased.
The air was in a tumult. Wave on wave
Of horror and of anguish seemed to ride
Upon the April winds, he could not rest.
He rose and stood beneath the shining stars,
So bright, so still. But all their quietness
Was far above the earth. Forces unseen
But felt, swept past him, as 'twere regiments
Of darkness, powers of evil, gates of Hell
Prevailing against some great shrine of light.
Through changeful years, midst battle hurri-
  canes,
Never had any terror like to this
Struck through his soul with such forboding
  dire.
He faced the night, gazed on the starry heavens,
Turned tremblingly untowards the April breeze,
And waited as forestalling some wild stroke
Out of the dark upon resistless breast.

At length the air was filled with midnight mist.
Fast-thickening clouds that hid the firmament

Passed o'er him. In mysterious heaviness
Of body and of mind, bewildered, awed,
He strove again to sleep. 'Twas sleep that comes
In intermittent moments towards the dawn,
'Twixt weary watchings round the couch of
death.

IN THE CITY OF THE SEVEN HILLS

With early morn Lee hastened on his course.
How beauteous was the day! No sign of Nature
Gave token of the strange preceding night.
Perchance it was himself, his weary frame,
His morbid mind, his subtle fantasies
Weaving his thoughts round Calvary's ancient scenes.
But now 'twas day, earth's bright inspiring day,
Sweet with the odors of the peach-tree blooms
And all the delicate sorceries of the Spring.
He would hold revel with the happy birds
Greeting his every step with matin songs.
He would breathe deep the freshening air of morn
And fill his heart with sunshine off the hills.
How beauteous was the day, and earth, and God!
Good Friday ended he would enter in
Where Heaven's awaiting Easter Angels thronged

Round the still Form to chant with holy joy
Above their King triumphant, "He is risen!"

Before him Richmond's roofs and spires arose,
Though charred and blackened by the recent
flames.
Above the Capitol Old Glory waved.
He saw it and was glad and greeted it.
He crossed the river past the bridges wrecked,
And rode along the streets o'er ashen waste
Beneath his horse's feet at every turn.
The people soon discerned him, crowded round,
And greeted him as 'twere a conquerer
And not a vanquished captain on parole.
In earlier days, when he was in their midst,
They counted him their certain watch and ward.
So now they felt again, as he passed by,
The sense of safety from a father's presence.

Onward he rode, returning graciously
Their greetings, but with solemn gravity,
Signet of care and sorrow. Soon he reached
A portal that had waited open wide
For the home's lover-lord and loving head
To take his vacant throne of tenderness.
Softly the door closed on him and the scene
Which only angel sentinels beheld.

LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

LEANING his war-worn spirit on the hearts
Of wife and children in embraces sweet,
He found the Holy of Holies of his life—
What God had saved for him while Richmond burned
And Appomattox cordons closed him round.
O love and home, O peace and rest that shrine
The heavenlies midst the earthlies of the world,
Faith's structures on God's rock foundations built,
Time's winds and floods shall never overwhelm you!

He scarce had greeted love and hearth and friends,
When presently a rumor swept across
The Southern Capital, and in its path

A train of rumors, monstrous, ominous.
Men stood aghast, hard-clutching at their hearts,
And the whole Nation, North and South as one,
Staggering beneath Hell's sudden murderous blow,
Uttered a mighty cry of anguishment,
A thunderous cry of horror and dismay,
Like Egypt's when her smitten people bowed
Over their first-born dead in every home,
And all the midnight winds were filled with wailings.
Lincoln was dead, the High Priest of the Nation
With its new birth of freedom under God.
Lincoln was dead—slain at the very altar
Of the great Temple of Emancipation.
As the wild ocean's ebbing waves at night
Dash through some narrow channel of the rocks
And break in fury o'er a quiet cove,
So rolled the violent tale of crime and woe,
Bursting across the threshold of Lee's home.
It whelmed his brain, his heart, his every sense
With horror working anguish—for at last
His soul had had a vision of Lincoln's soul,
Beholding him the Savior of the Nation.

And now a slaughterous hand had laid him
low—
So low, so low. A mighty Tree of Life
God planted for the healing of the world
Had fallen, and lay prostrate on the earth,—
So low, so low, so prostrate and so fallen.
Now knew he why upon the yesternight,
Good Friday night, he slept not, feeling gloom,
Confusing tumult and bewildering woe
Riding the winds and rushing over him.
They were the black hours when the great
Christ-Man,
The South's just friend, his own just friend
likewise,
Fixed to his cross was slowly dying, while
Hell's loosed wild minions pressing round him
cast
Lots for his seamless robe of government.

THE LAST BLOW OF SLAVERY

Who did it? Could it be a madman's act?
Yet there were others marked for similar
doom—
His counsellors of state, his battle-chiefs,
His faithful partners in the great redemption.
Could it be issuance from the pits of Hell
Headed by demons round the seats of power,
A huge conspiracy—this part performed?
Yet he who did the deed, madman or fiend,
Effrontery's incarnation and dispatch,
Joined with the act Virginia's ancient phrase,
The motto of Lee's own loved Commonwealth,
Upon her Seal and in her people's hearts—
"Sic Semper Tyrannis!"—Oh the shame of it!
Out of the Old Dominion rose indeed
A host in arms waging an open war;
But never from Virginia, his Virginia,
The beauteous mother of heroic sons,
Could come such foul degenerates of hate.

Who did it? Not Virginia nor the South.
And yet the slayer cried above the slain,
"The South is avenged!" Alas the infamy,
The diabolic lie! Out of the South
Poured blood for independence, not revenge;
Sank life for civic faith, not malediction.

Lee's nature was on torture's ponderous wheel.
Through every chamber of his harrowed mind
Interrogations trooped, discordant tongues
Clamored within him and would not be
hushed,—
The while he voiced abhorrence vehement,
His reason's censure and his heart's regret,
Clearly and sternly in the midst of men—
The while was sounded o'er the anguished land,
As with a trumpet from an outraged host,
The South's rejection and denouncement loud
Of the arch-crime and the Hell-hatch of it—
Arch-crime Hell-hatched by minds in Stygian
bonds—
Projected seizure of the President,
Handcuffs and chains and prison swamps afar
Down in the Carolina marshes fixed,
Threatenings of execution following
The ransom price of deed demoniac

Refused, together with Confederate claims.
But on a sudden the arch-murder came
Before the enslavement of the Nation's Chief;
And all the Nation heard, and the far cry
Above the world's prolonged anathemas
Lingers along the highway of the ages.

At last by that refined and psychic sense
Which feels the oracles behind the veils,
The invisible interpreters of fate,
Lee in one flash of high enlightenment
Perceived the murderer and his deed of hate,
The son of Belial, chosen of the Abyss,
Composite onslaught of ten thousand fiends
Incarnate in a new Iscariot.
'Twas Slavery's last blow at Liberty
Ere it crept back into the bosom of Hell.
'Twas crushed Rebellion's final venomed sting
Ere it went writhing down red dust to death.

THE BELL OF OLD SAINT JOHN'S

WHILE thus Lee mused upon the interplay
Of history and sophistry, his mind
Seeing anew each tragic fallacy,
His heart perceiving as in mirrors clear
The march of consequences, love withal,
And time's processions of Democracy
Passing beneath the banners of the sky,
A-sudden from the City's shining spires
The chimes rang out the season's Passion
strains;
And as they phrased the sacrifice of Love
Upon Emancipation's lifted Cross,
He seemed to hear, as from its ancient tower,
The sweet commingling bell of Old Saint John's,
And Patrick Henry's far reverberant voice—
There in that sacred and historic fane,
There at the Old Dominion's very heart—
Raising the war-cry of the Revolution,
Shouting, "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet

As to be purchased at the price of chains
And slavery? . . . Give me liberty or death!"
At length Lee saw, at last he understood.
Had he not fought for chains and slavery,
Abhorring both? And likewise for disunion,
To him repugnant, had he not drawn sword?
And thus had he not joined with all they meant,
Were, and might be for myriad after years.

Disunion, Slavery! Against these twain
Lincoln, the Nation's Head, had been engaged,
Fighting the battles of Democracy,
And ever in the spirit of the Christ;
And fighting thus had fallen, as Christ fell,
In the great cause of human liberty.

And there in Richmond, with the memories
Of his last night's confusions, and the sense
Of a new Calvary thrust upon the world,
At Lincoln's Cross Lee saw America
And Love's redemption of her, North and
South.
And there in blood by hands of Slavery shed
He cleansed his spirit of the past's delusions.

LINCOLN'S BURIAL

To the Gray Captain, sorrow-bowed and lone,
Came from the martyred Lincoln's open grave,
Borne by bewailing winds across the land,
And chilling all the burgeoning of the May,
Again the Second Inaugural, the chief
Of tributes brought by broken-hearted ones,
And read, as from the Nation's sobbing soul,
Oracularly at his burial.
'Twas spirit triumphing o'er "Dust to dust!":
'Twas chant of faith round Grief's ensanguined
shrine;
'Twas Law's stern words 'twixt flaming Cherubim,
But spoken from above the Mercy Seat
And penetrant with covenantal grace
Forth issuing from mystic Light and Wings.

Lee saw the funeral pageant slowly pass
Across the Nation's heart unto its goal.

He felt the potence of love's high intents,
The prayers, the hymns, the intoned Inaugural;
He sensed the falling tears, the beating hearts
Along the circle of bowed worshippers;
And far o'er lamentations skyward flung,
He heard the rolling wheels of Nemesis
Down the elegiac music of the stars.

Alas, his own pure soul had dwelt among
Deep valleys at the feet of cloud-wrapped mounts,
His vision blinded by delusive mists.
For Old Virginia he had bared his sword,
Not seeing, as now he saw, the venomed thing
Coiled round the hidden sources of her life.
In those past days her will was paramount,
Throned midst the empire of his thoughts and loves.
In those past days the Blue Flag of Virginia
Claimed constant sovereignty o'er mind and heart.
Oh fair pavilions of the Old Dominion,
Nature's extension of the Age of Gold!
Dear Arlington and Richmond well-beloved!
Proud ancestry, sweet hearthstone, cherished bonds!—

Alas, illusions long and battle-scarred!
And for the reason that his greatness lay
In manhood even as in generalship,
Lee bowed his soul to Truth's immediate Seers,
And listened to the Oracles of God.

THE GREAT RENASCENCE

At length he stood, the privileged of Truth
By God's grace, as the wild winds of defeat
Blew the wild clouds from off the mountain tops.
He turned and faced the pageant luminous,
Feeling the potence of a Holy Breath,
Hearing the rhythms of a high persuasion.

Trembling before his strange theophany
He saw himself through Heaven's o'erpowering,
The chosen vessel of a great renascence.
'Twas spirit answered spirit as God's heights
Called to man's depths. A new light flaming leaped
Into his eyes. The battle-flush of yore
Rose to his brow. His hand passed to his side
As if to draw again his sheathèd sword.
He heard the Nation's future summoning,

Union and Liberty in high commands.
He heard the spirit of the martyred Chief
Above discordant tongues of time and change.
He felt the fringe of his redemption robe,
And power emergent from his healing purpose.
What Lincoln would have featured for his people—
Lee's suffering people, Lincoln's weary children—
He must attempt with similar fatherliness;
He must become a savior to the South.

'Twas revelation and transfiguration,
The Open Heavens and the White Battalions,
The Stars of Morning and the Golden Trumpets,
A Power descending and a Covenant Glory,
While Dream and Duty linked their shining wings.

Now should his Standard be the Stars and Stripes;
Now should his Capital be Washington;
Now should his Country be the United States,
And he no longer a Virginian
But an American.—The Day had dawned.

Part Three

BENEATH OLD GLORY

THE SAVIOR OF THE SOUTH

Prelude

LEXINGTON OF OLD VIRGINIA

Lo, it rests among the hills,
  Old Virginia's Lexington.
What romantic glory fills
  History's every guerdon won!
How its fields of green and gold
Nature's fantasies unfold!

Here lived Southern Gentlemen;
  Here dwelt Ladies of high grace;
Here proud youth, with sword and pen,
  Trained for duty's call and place.
Thus the story and the song
The illustrious past prolong.

Stonewall Jackson gave it fame;
  Now he lies beneath its sod.

Here the Mighty Captain came,
  Wrought and died a Prince with God.
Lee and Jackson! They are crown
Great enough for any town.

Towns there are that tell of war.
  This is one that speaks of peace.
Only once a crimson star
  Smote its quiet years' increase.
But its skies of hope were blue;
Faith was strong, and love was true.

Towns there are that tell of marts.
  This is one that speaks of lore,—
Science, Beauty's finer arts,
  Wisdom's riches, Culture's store,
Generous Halls of Imagery
Named for Washington and Lee.

Lo, it rests among the hills,
  History's favored Lexington,
While remembrance sweetly thrills
  Old Virginia's every son.
Thus it flings immortal gleams
Through the Old Dominion's dreams.

PAVILIONS OF PEACE

'Twas revelation and transfiguration
Out of the heavens for him God's new elect.
Seeing he rose, believing he resolved.
No proffered wealth, nor ease, nor worldly state,
Not even retirement and tranquillity,
Could tempt his soul. Ever great strains he heard,
Calling and calling. He dared not refuse.
Henceforth he was to serve America—
Not with the sword, not with a host in arms,
But with his mind and with experience
Got off war's battlefields, and from ascents
Where knowledge turns to wisdom, faith to sight.

After great voices, academic doors
Swung open, seats of privilege stood forth,
Inviting holy aspirations blent
Into sweet harmonies within the soul.

As once he looked upon his marching troops
And led the young men of the South in war,
So now he gazed upon the Southern youth
With a new passion. He would be their head,
Their Captain still, but on the fields of peace,
To train them in the ways of fealty,
To teach, to guide, to show the pageants fair
That pass between the heavens and the earth—
Ideals of spirit, service nationward,
Virtue's exemplars, life's beatitudes,
The North and South in brotherhood conjoined,
The Constitution—freedom's Magna Charta;
The Stars and Stripes—symbol inviolate
Of Law and Liberty together throned
With Love, a Trinity invincible—
For sake of a redeemed America,
For true Democracy's increasing sons.

A PLACE OF ORACLES

'Twas revelation and transfiguration.
Seeing he rose, resolved he entered in—
The warrior-priest of Culture's ancient fane,
The prophet-royal of the age of peace.

The name and fame of Lee turned broken shrines
Into rebuilded altars of the soul
Bright with the fires of a new chivalry.
Thus Lexington became a gloried place.
Unto it flocked the young men of the South.
They met Lee there, enrolled beneath his sign
Of education and allegiance.
They felt the spirit of Lincoln there through Lee.
They learned the culturing of sacrifice,
The knowledge that is power because it serves.
And from Lee's presence went illumined sons

Of a great Alma Mater, priests and seers
Of the New South and of a saved Republic.

Thus did the town of Lexington become
A place of oracles. Lee's acts of grace
Were challengers unto the noblest beats
Of Southern hearts. And as he finely spoke
So finely they accepted. Words from him
Were phrasings of the Right. His loyalty
Unto the Union was the final blow
To the Confederate dream. And through the
South,
Blasted and wasted by the wrack of war,
Allegiance as the offspring of Lee's soul
Arose in all the people's bruised hearts,
Turning to welcome of the larger day.

A LYRIC TO CULTURE

'OWLEDGE that has a golden tongue
Turns into wisdom as it speaks.
.ep springs of goodness, though unsung,
-Inspire the music Nature seeks.
is thus alone comes culture's excellence
hat subtly heavenward moves the earthly soul
and sense.

n ancient sage stood in a cleft
Of Horeb's mount to see pass by
God's glory; and the passing left
God's goodness fixed on ear and eye.
'Tis the same holy vision now as then;
Glory is goodness, grace supreme of God and
men.

Goodness is power, and issuing binds
Spirits in wisdom, flinging out

Fine dreams of destiny to minds
  That wakening feel the sky about.
Forth voices, trumpets, splendors glorified
By goodness! So shall Truth its verities confide.

AT STONEWALL JACKSON'S GRAVE

THERE is a humble spot at Lexington—
The grave of Stonewall Jackson, near the Church
He loved, and worshipped in. From Chancellorsville
To Richmond his belovèd form was borne
For public funeral honors. Thence it passed
To this the city of his previous years.
And when the war was ended, and Lee went
To Lexington upon his new emprise,
This spot was dear to him. To it ofttimes
He strolled, and with bared head beside it stood,
Letting the winds blow round him and high thoughts
Possess his heart and dim his lifted eyes.

It was a spur to memory working sweet
Into life's bitter. 'Twas a wakener
Of olden comradeship and sympathy.

And over it at times he seemed to hear
A bugler's reveillè that called again
Afar and faint his spirit unto arms
And victory across the shining dawn.

Death flings no silence round the listening heart.
Music that is of love's rememberance
Resistless breaks over the dikes of dust.
Who only at the Easter time perceives
Angels before the doors of sepulchers
Chanting the message of the endless life,
Has missed the daily joy that might have been
His for the longing, for the faith, the look.

At Stonewall Jackson's grave! But he was not
One of the earthlies now. God's miracle
Had come to flesh, to spirit, freedoming
The Immortal for the new habiliments.

There at the place where the white highways
meet
Out of the blue o'er which Love's couriers pass,
Lee found not Jackson, but he found himself.
No man can find himself till he has seen
His life's perspectives pierce eternity
O'er death and dust into the Bosom of God.

At Stonewall Jackson's grave Lee found his soul
And all the meaning and content of it,
And vision worth the past's deliriums,
Two Angels of Consolement,—one who cried
"He is not here for he is risen,"—and one
Who voiced the reconcilement mystical
Of prayers 'gainst prayers that stormed the throne of God.
Jackson had prayed. His grave brought back to Lee
His great Lieutenant's deep religiousness.
Lincoln had also prayed importunately,
As Lee knew well, feeling the endless rhythms.
Each prayed for victory which could come to one,
But not to both. And now the martyr twain
Were side by side beholding in high light
Each other, and the Christ. And Lee, their own,
Of the same spiritual order, bowed
At Stonewall Jackson's grave, and understood
The mystery of answered prayer,—the while
His fine and questing nature felt the hues
Or rainbows beating through grief's mist, and heard

Love's delicately brooding missioners
Choiring redemption's reconcilement strains.

At Stonewall Jackson's grave Lee saw man's pride
Cindered, his glory dust, and ruin round
Of might that counts on might save as it comes
An effluence out of Truth's dominion sky.
Such he beheld about the historic spot
Where rest of faith engulfed his restlessness.
He felt the presence of Life's witnesses
To Death's complete defeat, the grave's likewise.
He the Defeated had perceived the Power
That swept a Nation into triumph's course
Before his shattered armies. Now he saw
His foes to all he counted as of worth
Conquered by Life and Love and Miracle.
And out of every battle of his spirit
At Stonewall Jackson's grave Lee rode victorious,
Leading the deathless Columns of his Hope,
And hearing midst God's White Battalions
The everlasting Trumpets of his Dreams.

IN THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA

Amidst the countryside near Lexington,
Beyond the ranges of his duty's courses
And the high haltings of a hero's grave,
Lee found the sacred shrines of Nature's heart.
Far into Old Virginia's hills and vales
Daily he rode upon his battle-horse,
Traveler, his heart's beloved "Confederate
Gray";
Traveler, his one associate and delight;
Together they had passed war's crimson years;
Together they had felt the victor's joy;
Together they had sorrowed midst defeat;
And 'twixt them there was mutual sympathy.
The Mighty Captain's word and motion roused
Instant response of equine energy.
And through the after days of peace the twain
Were separated not. Affection deep
Each gave the other. So they daily roved,
Rider and horse, among Virginia's hills,

Enjoying sweet and mystic confidence.
Who shall deny the Great Gray General's
claim,—
His two companions, God and Traveler?

God met them truly as they daily roamed—
Master and servant—filling Nature's lips
With sacred carollings and holy rhythms
Of bird-notes, rivulets, and little children
Across the yellow jasmines and the red-buds,
The orange trees perfuming all the woods,
The roadside gardens and their pleasing bowers
Of bright azaleas and japonicas.
From Nature's heart the lilt and luster flowed,
And Beauty's song was on the lips of morning.

God ever meets him who would meet with God,
And moves beside him up ascension ways.
Oh what a comradeship of spirit with spirit,
While all the radiant forms of earth and sky
Watch marvelling to do sweet reverence
Unto a happy God and happy man!
Whenever God and man thus meet and move,
The flaming swords at Eden's gates are
sheathed;
Stern Cherubim turn smiling servitors;

The winds of ancient chill are living breaths
Warmed by the fervors of all-glowing love;
The long-hushed birds of Paradise begin
Anew their olden joyous melodies;
Glad voices call, and round the Tree of Life
Bright angels swing fruited beatitudes
For tasting and for seeing God is good.

'Twas somehow thus Virginia's landscape
changed
With moods and movements of the mighty
Chief,
And light and love followed the vision new
And new communions, such as they possess
Who mount the sky out of great sorrowings
Knowing the sweetness of a soul's redemption.

THE PAGEANT ON THE HILLS

And ever as Lee rode there marched beside,
His battle comrades, close imaginings
Of soldier-laden past, though scattered far,
Yet his, his gray belovèds, conquerors
Of time and space by love inviolate,
The incorruptible defying death,
The victory that follows up defeat.
And all the red and turbulent fields of war,
The smoke, the serried ranks, the rush and surge
Of men and horses, flashing swords high-swung,
The lines of belching guns, wide sheets of flame,
And carnage swaths blood-spattered, corse-
bestrewn—
These passed a mystic circle round about.
He saw each arc completed in the whole—
His soul's circumference of memories—
The girth become a chain of oracles
Unfolded to the perfect will of God.
And all his thoughts ascended worshipping.

Beauty was Nature's priest and celebrant.
Amid her myriad shrines remembrances
Took on a skyey saneness, and he saw
Heaven's pinnacles to all the roads of life
And the wide landscape of Love's purposes.
As roamed he meditation's mystic paths
The Mighty Captain found a daily cheer—
Sweet wells of promise, streams of living hope,
Whose virtues were the soothing of the spirit.
Blessed are they that find them and drink deeply.

So found he and so drank he as he rode.
And like twain angels greeting saints of eld
In the far days of symbol and of dream,
There daily passed before him on the hills
The New South with her pageantry of morn
After the night, and his unfolding Mission
Beside her with a wonderment of gaze,
As lithe hands smote the clouds before her go-
ings.

PRELUDE: LIFE AND LOVE

Life and Love went flying, flying,
  Out of the world together.
Nothing cared they for pain or dying,
  Nothing for stormy weather.
    Up they flew
    Towards the blue,
Earth and time defying.

Life and Love kept winging, winging,
  Higher and ever higher.
Slowly their bright forms vanished, swinging
  Into a heavenly choir.
    On they flew
    Through the blue
Ageless and deathless, singing.

Photo by M. Miley & Son, Lexington, Va.

THE SHRINE OF THE SOUTH

Edward Valentine's recumbent marble figure of General Robert E. Lee, in the Lee Memorial Chapel at Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia

INTO THE MISTS

WHAT weaponry of war could not achieve
'Mid fiercest battle flame, the natural seed
Of mortal flesh accomplished, setting free
The immortal spirit by the imperious force
That makes Death captive to o'erwhelming Life.
'Twas liberty to range the Morning Stars,
'Twas union with the shining Sabaoth
And centuried saints before the throne of God.

He, earth's first strategist, in one swift flash
Beheld the strategy Heaven's Captaincy
Uses to conquer Death, to save a soul,
And work the far compulsion of His purpose.

What sweetness, light, and faultless harmony
Broke on Lee's consecrated being, ere
The closest, tenderest watcher could perceive
Departure, as his great victorious soul
Rode in delirious moment out of sight

On fancied Traveler into wheeling mists
Of White Battalions waiting his ascent
To side of Stonewall Jackson!
So he passed,
The South's high Captain and her patriot Sage,
Having through fire and tempest wrought God's Will
Because he loved God's Will; leaving no trail
But such as brightens all the vales of faith,
And kindles all the hills of reverence.

So was he Earth's and Heaven's Gray Cavalier,
Bringing to be what never might have been
Without his chivalry and sacrifice,—
The South's redemption and the Nation's hope.

THE SHRINE OF THE SOUTH

In sculptored dignity and calm repose
The Mighty Captain's marble figure lies
Within the Chapel which he built and served,
Yet so exposed to all the sacred space
That they who worship there confront the shrine
Of the devoted South, where incense burns
Unceasing at the hands of Memory.

One sought the martial altar, mind and heart
Stirred by remembrance of historic days
And of a life immortal. There he lay,
A soldier sleeping as on tented field,
The guns of battle hushed forevermore.

Beside the form an agèd woman stood,
And close to her a lad, grandson forsooth.
Her hair lay white and scant o'er wrinkled brow,
And yet a youthful radiance filled her eyes.
She spoke in gentle accents to the boy,

Reciting fervently heroic deeds,
Extolling a pure life's benignities
Through war and peace, and telling of a soul,
The Old Dominion's soul articulate,
That claimed the South's confederate faith and pride
And love idolatrous in life and death.
And as she wandered on, her pale thin palms
Caressed the marble brow, and ranged along
Gloved hands and sheathèd sword, till suddenly
Her voice broke, and she wept. And as she paused
Thus, there, for one strange moment's space she seemed
The Shade of Old Virginia.
Then he spoke—
The mute observer of the tender scene—
"Madam, you must have known and loved him well!"
Whereat she turned, lifting her agèd face
With tearful gaze, and answered tremblingly,—
"Ah yes! I gave three sons to General Lee." *

* The above entire narrative is an accurate account of the author's personal experience.